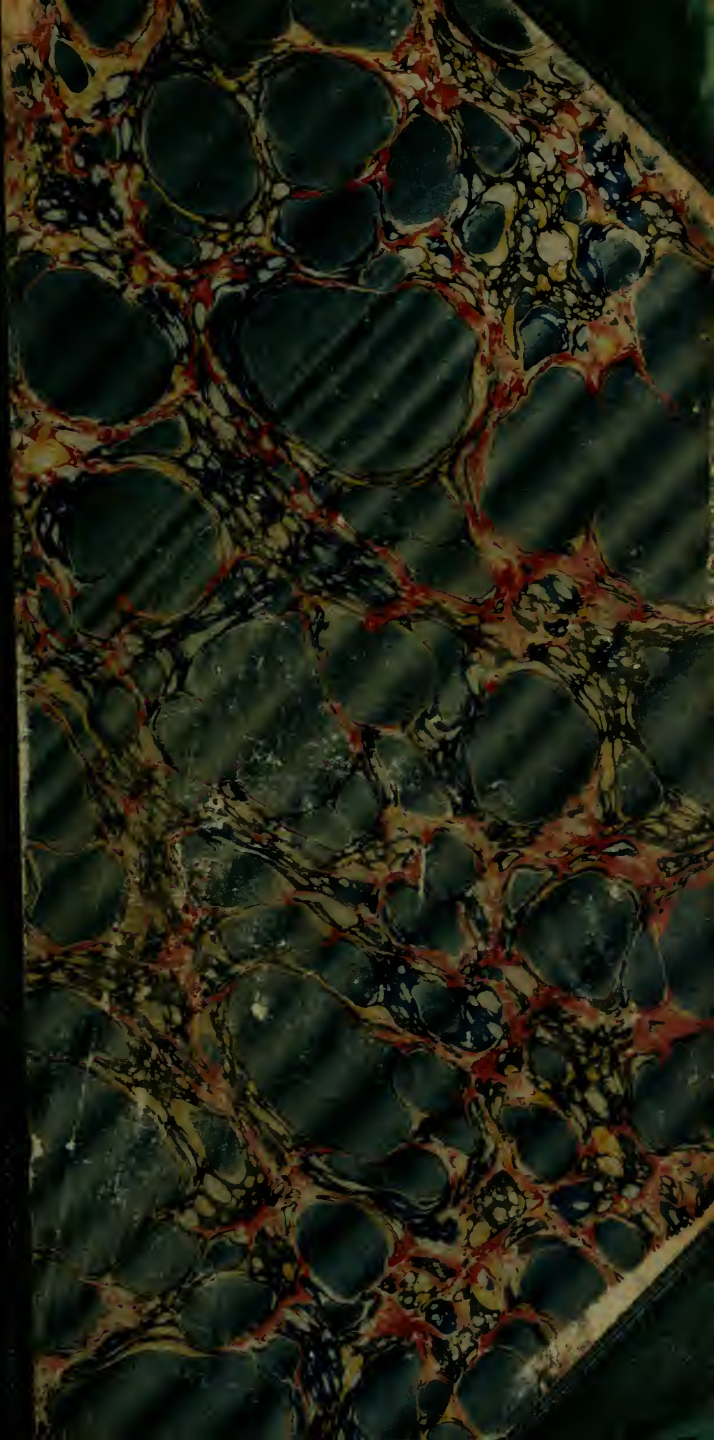




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June 20th 1577.

Richard Holmden.







HILLINGDON HALL;

OR,

THE COCKNEY SQUIRE;

A TALE OF COUNTRY LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“HANDLEY CROSS,” &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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HILLINGDON HALL;

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THE COCKNEY SQUIRE.

A TALE OF COUNTRY LIFE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough.”

THOMSON.

“AR wish t’ ard man mayn’t ha’ lost hissel’,” said Pigg to Jovey, as, after a long-continued effort with the remaining couple of hounds, they at last gave up the chase of poor puss, and commenced gathering the scattered pack, preparatory to returning home. “Hast seen ou’t on him?” continued Pigg, casting his eye over the surrounding country.

“He was sittin’ astride a stone wall the last time I see’d him,” replied Jovey.

“Ay, but he came away after that,” replied Pigg, “ar seed him blunderin’ o’er the fallow below, makin’ after the hunds as it were. Ah, dear! ar wish he mayn’t ha’ lamed hissels, or happen’d a misfortin,” observed Pigg, anxiously; adding, “sink, he’s ’ardly fit to be trusted frae heam by hissels’.”

“Is he a very old gentleman?” asked Jovey.

“Why, no, he’s not se ard,” replied Pigg, “but he’s se daft—he’s lived i’ great towns all his life, and he thinks to see gas lights and poliss stuck all about the country. Let’s call hunds together, and, may be, while we’re callin’ them he may cast up;” so saying, Jovey and Pigg got on to an eminence and began holloaing — “Cop, come away! cop, come away! cop, hunds! cop! Here Trusty, here Jumper! cop Jumper! cop Jinger! *evooy, evooy*, hunds, *evooy!*” being a corruption of the words “here away, away hounds, away.”

The hounds came slowly crawling to halloo, from different parts; and, after half-an-hour spent in this way, our sportsmen had scraped three couple and a half together, and, no more appearing likely to cast up, Pigg proposed that Jovey should take one route, and he another, and try to recover Mr. Jorrocks and the rest. “Ye

tak dogs wi' ye," said Pigg, "and gan round yon way," waving his arm to the left, "and keep holloain' as ye can, and see," added he, "and keep an eye on the grund, and try to prick t'ard squire by the heels ; he's gettin a pair o' Jemmy London bouts on, wi' small taper heels, than gan a lang way into the grund, and, if ye keep a sharp look out, ye may chance to come upon him by the track ;" so saying, Pigg gave such of the hounds as seemed inclined to follow him, a kick, and Jovey, by dint of coaxing, got them away after him.

"Ar wonder what's gotten t'ard man," said Pigg to himself, striding along, looking in all directions, and taking an occasional peep at the ground to see if he could prick Mr. Jorrocks by the heels. "He'd niver gan heam," said he to himself, "as long as hunds could run, surely, and yet there's nout to see on him. Ar'll clim this hill, for ar really think he mun ha' happen'd a misfortin ;" so saying, Pigg legged it up the hill as though he were just turning out fresh for the day.

* * * * *

"Yonder's t'ard nag," said he, as he reached the top and saw Dickey Cobden in the distance,

pacing slowly up and down, in charge of the shepherd. "Where *can* t'ard squire ha gotten? Sink, he *mun* ha' happen'd a misfortin," added he, as broken legs and collar bones flashed across his mind. "He's safe enough afoot though," continued Pigg, recollecting himself, "he may ha brust hissels' or died of apperplexy, though," added he, as the prophecy of the morning returned to his recollection.

Pigg was in a great stew—he ran here and there, stood on walls, and climbed every eminence that commanded the surrounding country, and, like most people in a pucker, cast far away, and never thought of looking near home. The consequence was, that Mr. Jorrocks, who had ensconced himself amid a group of projecting rocks, at the top of a narrow dell, with which the country abounded, was wholly overlooked by James Pigg.

* * * * *

"Sink, is yon a corby?" said Pigg to himself, as Mr. Jorrocks's hat moved above the top of the stones.

"*Hup, hawway! hup! hup!*" shouted Pigg, knocking his stick against a stone to try and frighten the bird; Mr. Jorrocks then popped his

great red face over the rocks, to the great joy and astonishment of his man.

“God sink, if there baint his ard mug poppin over the stean!” exclaimed Pigg, starting off at full speed down hill to the place.

* * * * *

“Why, canny man,” said he, rushing breathless to the spot, “we’d ha’ thought that was ye? Sink, ar’ve been lookin’ for ye all o’er, and took thy hat for a corby! Gin ar’d had mar gon, there’s ne sayin’ but ar’d a shot thee. But what’s happened?” continued he, “thou’s not lamed thyself, hast thou?” continued Pigg, eyeing his master’s melancholy countenance.

“Vy, no,” replied Mr. Jorrocks, “not exactly, at least: I’ve had a bad fall though,” added he, pointing to his breeches’ knees.

“’Deed, has’ thou?” said Pigg, eyeing Mr. Jorrocks’s legs, “broken thy knees, I declare. Why, that *is* a bad job; however, they’ll mend; but, a dear, thou’s het!” added Pigg, “thy face looks just as though it had been blow’d red hot in a furnace. Ar’s warn’d thou’s tired,” added he, “thou’s not made for runnin; bide where thou is, and ar’l fetch t’ard nag to carry ye hame.”

"Oh, I can valk to the nag well enough," replied Mr. Jorrocks, starting up, unwilling that Pigg should know the extent of his failure.

"Why! why!" said Pigg, "walk if ye like; but ar kens where t'ard nag is, and ar could seun get him for thee. A, but we've had a grand hont!" added he, wiping the tobacco streams from his mouth with his sleeve.

"Ave you killed her?" asked Mr. Jorrocks, with a spice of his old ardour.

"Why, *noo*," drawled Pigg, "we didn't kill her, somehow; but that's all the better, ye ken—she'll mak' a grand hont another day."

"Another day, indeed!" replied Mr. Jorrocks, "I should think *one* was enough."

"Ay, but thou mun hont, if its nabbut te keep thysel out o' mischief," replied Pigg; "grand exercise—de ye far mair good nor farmin'."

"But it von't be so profitable," observed Mr. Jorrocks, with a shake of his head, as he trailed slowly along by the side of his man, with his hands behind his back.

"Ar doesn't ken that," said Pigg, with a shrug of the shoulders, "should say it wad de ye mair good nor farmin *as ye farm*."

"That's all you knows about the matter,"

grunted Mr. Jorrocks. "The new lights o' husbandry haven't broke in upon your wooden 'ead yet."

"Ar wish the mayn't *brik* ye," replied Pigg; "ar think thou's gannin a fair way for the dogs."

"I see you're one of the old-fashioned, stubborn, stupid sort o' sinners," grunted Mr. Jorrocks. "Jest blunder on in your old-fashioned ways, without either talent to strike out a new invention, or spirit enough to follow up what others diskiver—want enlightenment *desp'rate*."

"They'll lighten ye afore they're done with ye, I'll be bund," replied Pigg, with a sniff of his nose across his hand.

"I thought you chaps had been clever in the north," observed Mr. Jorrocks, after they had trudged on some time in silence.

"Cliver? ay," said Pigg, "o'er cliver to make sick asses o' ourselves as they de hereabouts."

"*Humph!*" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, not relishing the reception of his overture at reconciliation, "and vot'n hasses de ye see 'ere, pray?"

"Ah, asses!" exclaimed Pigg, at the top of his voice, "ar niver see'd sick wark! folks all gean clean mad together ar think!"

"*Humph!*" grunted Mr. Jorrocks again, won-

dering what Pigg had seen to astonish him. "It was nabbut yesterday," continued Pigg, "that ar called on Mr. Heavytail, and, instead of findin' him in his fields, sink if he wasn't rollin' a hogshead o' sugar into the barn. How now, Mr. Tail? says ar to him, says ar, are ye gannin' to torn grosser? 'Why no,' says he to me, says he, 'Mr. Pigg,' says he, quite pertly, 'ar's not gannin' to tarn grosser.' Then says ar to him, says ar, what the deavil ar ye gannin' to do wi' all the sugar—for ar see'd twe mair casks a standin' where he was rowlin' this yean te."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, perking up, "wonders if they came from our place; was there a great J. and Co. at the end, done in black paint, with red dots?"

"Can't say, ar's sure," replied Pigg; "but, howsomever, there was Mr. Tail, a rowlin' this yean in, and varra heavy it was, and varra hot it made Mr. Tail, se I took and gav it a shove along win him; and when we'd gotten it placed to his likin, ar seed a vast o' sand, and gravel, and rubbish, lyin' about o' barn floor like, se ar axed him what it was all for——"

"And what did he say?" eagerly inquired Mr. Jorrocks, darting to a conclusion.

"Why," said Pigg, turning the quid in his mouth, "he brak out just as ye de—talked about new leets (lights) old-fashioned farmin, and march o' somethin. Then he pointed at the sugar, and says he to me, says he, 'Ar'll be bound to say, Mr. Pigg,' says he, 'with all your north country knowledge, you can't tell me what that's for.' So, says ar to him, says ar, 'Ye have the advantage of me, Mr. Tail—'"

"Just so," observed Mr. Jorrocks, adding, "Well, go on."

"Why, then," said Pigg, "he tell'd me he'd been to a lector on farmin, some chap ganning about the country, talkin nonsense, had given, who'd tell'd him of a grand imposition for—"

"*Composition!*" observed Mr. Jorrocks, with an emphasis.

"Ay, grand composition," continued Pigg, "for makin tiles—drainin tiles. Ar doesn't ken how mony things had to be put into it, but there was *chark*, and sand, and gravel, and I doesn't ken what else, and the whole had to be mexed and stirred up wi' brown sugar."

"Vot a jackass the chap must be!" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, wondering how Mr. Heavytail ever could be so foolish as to adopt the idea.

“Why that’s just what ar said,” observed Pigg. “Says ar to Mr. Tail, says ar, ‘Ye surely mun be gannin clean daft, Mr. Tail, to think o’ wastin the sugar in this way. Hev ye ne quarry, nor ne gravel bed, nor ne place nigh at hand, where ye can get steanes, instead of makin sich a mess as this?’ But I might as well ha saved my breath, for arll ar gat was sarce and bad words.”

“Oh dear! Mr. Eavytail must be a werry stupid man,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, wondering how a tenant of his could have fallen into a trap he had only set for other people.

“Why, that’s what ar telled him,” said Pigg, “says ar te him, says ar, ‘Thou may fancy thysel a wise man, and may be ye may fancy the chap that tell’d ye all this a wise man; but for mar pairt, ar should say, it wad be hard to say whether on ye’s the bigger feul.’”

“*Did you, indeed?*” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks—wondering if Mr. Heavytail floored him.

“Faith did ar,” said Pigg, striking his staff against the ground—“them was just the varra words ar used—‘hard to say whether on ye’s the bigger feul.’”

“And vot did he say?” asked Mr. Jorrocks.

“Why he just glower’d and garped, and

grinned, and talked about the new leets in husbandry, and said, ar was a lang way ahint the information of the day—that this was the newest London invention, and that the newest things always cam frae there, and that Lunnuners knew mair than all other folks put together.”

“Vell, and what did you say?” continued Mr. Jorrocks, still anxious to hear all about it.

“Why, ar said, ar thought now’t o’ Lunnuners—that they might de varry well for makin women’s bonnets, and sich like; but as for makin drainin tiles, or kennin ou’t about farmin, ar wad’nt give a button-top for all their heads put tegither.”

“Humph!” grunted Mr. Jorrocks; adding, “Well, Mr. Eavytail, certain*lie*, is a bigger fool nor I took him for. Three ’ogseads o’ sugar, and, very likely, not got at our place either! The man’ll be ruined!”

“Ye’ll be lossin your rent,” observed Pigg; adding, “It ar’nt possible for a man te farm i’ that way and pay rent tee.”

“I opes I shall’nt lose the rent,” observed Mr. Jorrocks — “can’t afford to do that, howsomever; precious little one gets as it is—land-ownin’s a *werry* poor trade.”

“It *mun* be poor the way year folks gan on,” rejoined Pigg. “Sink, thou’s not much better

nor Heavytail thysel. It's nab'but t'other day like, I came upon old Tommy Sloggers, hangin his great beastly brandy bibbin neb over the yeat, gannin into his faller, his coat all stains, his breeches loose at the knees, his stockins hangin down, and the land as chock full o' weeds and dirt as ever it could had. 'Well, Mr. Sloggers,' said ar, '*admirin yee'r weeds! admirin yee'r weeds!* ye'll have a grand crop ar expect—you've much to be prud on—ye'll not be disappointed in nettles, whatever ye are i' the wheat.' 'Hoot, ye fond boddy,' said he, quite sarcy like, 'what do *ye* knaw about farmin? Ye're nout but a Boule leader!' 'Why, why,' said I, 'ar can tell a dirty faller from a clean 'un, however; and, of all dirty fallers that iver ar set eyes on, yeers is the dirtiest.' 'Ay, but stop till wor Squire's new invention comes on it,' said he, with a wink of his blear eye, 'and ye'll see how clean it'll be.' 'What invention?' said I. 'A what a man thou is to talk o' farmin!' said he; 'has'nt thou heard tell of our landlord's garnd machine for doin' all farmin'-work at once—ploughin', cleanin', sowin', harrowin', reapin'! Hoot, get away wi' ye!' said he; 'get yeer boole out; ye'r mair at heam wi' him nor out else.'

"Ay," said Mr. Jorrocks, "but I didn't say

nothin' about weedin'; besides, it was a mere speckilation altogether, and I never said nothin' about when the machine would be ready, or who I would lend it to, or nothin'."

"But, then, ye see, the warst o' ye grand folks talkin' is, that chaps, like Sloggers, just tak had of us much o' yeer jaw as sarves their torn, and then, if things dinna gan right, they say its yeer fault that ye telled them, and that they mun have a reduction o' rent. Now, Sloggers won't clean his land; and he'll say, thou tell'd him not, and that he kept it to try thy engine on."

"I'll Slogger him, if he does," observed Mr. Jorrocks, with a shake of the head—"besides," added he, "I'm *sure* I never said nothin' about the machine cleanin' land—did'nt know land required cleanin', indeed," added he, aloud to himself.

"But ye may depend, Sloggers 'ill look to ye for satisfaction," rejoined Pigg.

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, thinking he would'nt get it.

Master and man trudged on some time in silence, each occupied with his respective thoughts, Mr. Jorrocks considering whether, as "scientific farming" seemed likely to be expensive, he had better employ Pigg to undeceive the people, and

Pigg, muttering anathemas and strange oaths, against dung-doctors, man-doctors, horse-doctors, cow-doctors, and all sorts of doctors. At length they came to the boundary wall through which, our readers will remember, Mr. Jorrocks had squeezed, leaving his cob on the far side.

“ We mun be o’er here,” said Pigg, striding up to the wall, and laying a hand on the top.

“ That’s easier said nor done,” replied Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing its great height. “ Better return the way I came, I thinks,” added he, looking about for a place.

“ Ah, ye’ll seun get o’er ! ” replied Pigg, “ it’s nou’t of a wall.”

“ Is’nt it ? ” replied Mr. Jorrocks, as much as to say, “ *it is to me.* ”

“ Stick yeer toe in it like a man ! ” rejoined Pigg, placing his own on a projecting stone, to show his master the way.

Mr. Jorrocks tried, but down it slipped again. It would’nt do.

“ God sink, t’ard man’s gettin’ numb ! ” growled Pigg, as, lowering himself, he came to his master’s assistance. “ Here, now,” continued he, “ put thy foot in there,” said he, showing his master

the place, "and then give thyself a good hoist, and thou'll soon be a top."

Mr. Jorrocks did as desired ; but the hoist was a very ineffectual one. He did not even get his hat-crown level with the top of the wall.

"*Try again !*" exclaimed Pigg ; adding, "Give a good loup."

"Ah, '*non sum qualis eram !*'" said Mr. Jorrocks, with a strong accent on the "ram"—as he made a still more ineffectual effort than the first.

"Hoot, a ram wad think nou't of such a wall!" muttered Pigg ; adding, "Come now, put thy toe in again, and ar'll give ye a shove up ahint."

Mr. Jorrocks obeyed the order, and, with the aid of a strong hoist from Pigg's shoulder, succeeded in landing on the top. Pigg was quickly beside him, and master and man dropped down into the enclosure, where the shepherd was still pacing leisurely about with Dickey Cobden.

"Fatch him this way !" roared Mr. Jorrocks, waving his hat to the man ; adding, "it's as cheap ridin' as walkin'."

"When I'm rich, I rides in chaises ;
When I'm poor, I walks like blazes."

* * * * *

“ You’ve had a long wait,” observed our friend, hoisting himself on, and giving the man a shilling for his trouble.

Mr. Jorrocks then set off homewards.

“ Vell, Pigg,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, overtaking his man, who had gone striding on before, as he saw his master preparing to mount—“ vell, Pigg,” repeated he, “ I can’t get the idea of that unmitigated stooped old ’Eavytail and his sugar-casks out o’ my ’ead. The man must be werry soft to swallow all he’s told—Lord ! if they had him in London, ’ow they would rook him.”

“ Ar’s warn’d ye,” said Pigg—“ they’re gay and sharp there;” adding, “ but there are as big feuls as Heavytail hereabouts.”

“ Possibly,” replied Mr. Jorrocks—“ possibly ; but that’s not the question.”

“ Ar see’d a man t’other mornin’,” continued Pigg, without noticing his master’s observation, “ pepperin’ the land just as ye’d pepper a plate o’ cabbish. ‘ God sink ;’ said ar ; ‘ what’s thou about ?’ ‘ Giarnoin,’ said he. ‘ Giarnoin !’ said ar ; ‘ what good can that de the land ?—gan’ and get a few cart-loads o’ muck, and keep the giarno for thy puddin’—*Muck’s your man !* say I,” exclaimed Pigg, at the top of his voice.

“ Well, but one must do summit i’ this world to make oneself known,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, still anxious to put matters right and propitiate his man, in order to get Pigg to help him.

“ Varry true ;” said Pigg, “ varry true,” repeated he, filling his mouth with tobacco, and wiping the brown streams from his mouth with his sleeve, adding, “ mun de summit to mak worses conspikious—cannot all grow whiskers under our chins like Captain Bluster.”

“ Well, but farmin’s quite the go, you see, jest now,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, “ and it don’t do for us landlords to appear behind the tenants in information. If it wasn’t for the promotion o’ science I’m sure landowning would never pay. Talk o’ money i’ the funds !” added he, “ money i’ the funds may pay small interest ; but blow me tight, funds pay punctual, and the gates never want repairin’.”

“ Ar doesn’t knaw much about the funds,” replied Pigg, “ but thou’ll find the yeats a small matter i’ thy repair—mar cousin Deavilboger always said that ne man is fit to be called a farmer what isn’t a good grumbler.”

“ Faith, then, I’ve some uncommon good-un’s,” replied Mr. Jorrocks, “ for I never goes to inquire

after the 'ealth of the farmers' wives, or the state o' their 'ouses, but I gets sich a torrent of complaints that I thinks that my 'ouses must be all a tumblin' down together. One's roof rains in—another's barn beams are rotten—a third's edges are all dead—a fourth's pump's gone wrong; and so they go on."

"Ay, now, that's jest the way ye cul chaps de," replied Pigg, "ye seek for complaints. Instead o' ridin' into a man's fard, and axin' if his barn's watter-tight and his missis i' the family way, ye should gan in ramin' and swearin' and blawin' everybody up that comes in your way, and the man will be o'er glad to slip out the front way, and niver say nothin' about repairs."

"Ah, but the wives are far wuss nor the men!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks.

"Ay, that's because you're o'er kind wi' them," replied Pigg.

"*Humph*," grunted Mr. Jorrocks, not relishing the answer. "Some of the men are so whimsical," observed Mr. Jorrocks, thinking he might as well turn the conversation, "one sometimes wants exactly the reverse of another."

"Ars warnd ye," said Pigg; "ars warnd ye; some 'ill want parlours made into kitchens, and

other some, kitchens made into parlours. A parlour, i' mar mind, is varra little use to a farmer. They aye shut them up and sit i' their kitchens, or want a sort o' second parlour to save the best; just like mar coosin Deavilboger. He grumbled and fund fault wi' his omstead till the Squire rebuilt the whole on the largest and most improved plan—cost a sight o' money; and when it was finished the Devil shut up two-thirds on it, sayin' it was far o'er big for the farm."

"That's the way they go on," said Mr. Jorrocks, digging his heel into Dickey Cobden.

"There was Harry Grumble, of Clottergate," said Pigg, "wadn't take his farm till the landlord would build him a porch to his front door, because he said he'd always been used to a porch, and he liked to see his missis sittin' knittin' in it when he came home half drunk frae the market; and se, what with his wishes and what with his wants, the landlord at last built one—cost the matter, ar dare say, of ten pounds. Well, Harry was so varra punctual i' the drinkin' way that he forgot to provide his rent, and the consequence was, he was soon bundled out again, and the farm was to let.

John Brick was the man to take it ; but nothin' wad sarve Brick but the porch should come down. He'd never been used to a porch, and didn't like the look of a porch ; so down cam' porch again."

"The beggar," grunted Mr. Jorrocks.

"Jonas Hen's pigs were aye on Mr. Blatherington's coach-road," continued Pigg, "and he swore till he was maist black i' the face about it ; but Hen persisted that the pigs must have room to wander about, for if they were kept coop'd up i' the sty, their legs wad get crook'd, and they'd want far mair meat, and so on. At last yean night the squire was comin' home either varra drunk or it was varra dark, for he tumbled over t'ard sow as she lay across road like. 'Sink it,' said he i' the mornin', 'I'll build this ard beggar a new range of sties, with airin' yards in front, for ar can't stand splittin' my kerseymeres i' this way'—just as you've done," observed Pigg, looking at Mr. Jorrocks's knees ; "se at it he went—built an uncommon fine range of sties, with ars warn'd ye a quarter of a yacre of ground walled in ; and when it was done, Squire Blatherington said to Hen, Now, Mr. Hen, ar hopes yeer pigs will have the kindness to

keep off mar coach-road, for ar can't stand them, and they've plenty of elbow-room and everything, pigs should have in this spacious yard. 'Ay, ay, sir,' said Hen; 'but for mar pairt ar always think they're just as well i' the sty altogether.' 'Queer devils', farmers," added Pigg, replenishing his mouth with tobacco.

"They are that," assented Mr. Jorrocks.

"The best way of stoppin' their gabs," said Pigg, "is gannin about the country with a great armful o' plans; and as soon as ever a man begins with his wants, unroll the plan, and say you propose buildin' his premises afresh, and want to talk to him about the leadin'."

"That's a good idea," said Mr. Jorrocks, with a nod—"a werry good idea."

"Or if they talk about yeats (gates), say there's yeat wood provided, and they've nothin' to do but employ a joiner to work it up. They'll make the 'ard 'uns last a long while when they've to pay for makin' the new 'uns, and t'ard housin' 'ill stand tee if they've te lead to the new un."

"Ar wad say now," observed Pigg, after a long pause, during which he trudged on beside his master, "instead o' talkin' nonsense to the farmers, and gettin' them to try fond experiments;

it wad be far better if ye mun make yoursel' conspicuous, to train a few lads on, as they de i' wor country, and gar them pay for yeer knowledge."

"Ow's that?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks, thinking it sounded like money.

"Have what they call mud students," replied Pigg; "some of the great farmers i' the north have them, and they pay well whether they larn ought or not."

"Vot! a sort of an agricultural college is it?" asked Mr. Jorrocks.

"No! college; no," replied Pigg, "jest a youth or two i' the 'ouse, that you may give lectors to if you like."

"Keep in the 'ouse?" observed Mr. Jorrocks, "shouldn't like that—be pullin' the gals about p'raps."

"A, sink ye can de that yoursel'," muttered Pigg. "If ye dinna like them i' the house," observed he, raising his voice, "ye can lodge them wi' some o' the tenants, and jest have them in when ye want to extonish them with your larnin'."

"That's more like the ticket," thought Mr. Jorrocks aloud to himself, adding, "but wot am I to do with them on intermediate days, when I'm not a lectorin' in fact?"

“Why, thou mun send them out into the fields to kick the clods about, and ax fond questions.”

“But they must ’ave somebody to go with them, to answer them, and tell them wot’s wot.”

“Let them find out theirsels, they’ll like it far better if they de,” replied Pigg.

“That would hardly be fair, though: if one undertakes to instruct them, one ought to be as good as one’s word,” observed Mr. Jorrocks. “We shouldn’t ’ave them in any numbers though,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, “a lecturin’ to empty benches is werry poor sport.”

“Ay, but ye can get in the ard wives and bairns, anybody but the farmers,” replied Pigg; “there’s ne fear of misleadin’ t’ ard women.”

“No, that won’t do,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, half to Pigg, half to himself. “If they’d have the agricultural college they talk of in the *Mark Lane Express*, here, and make me principal, *that* would be summut like; but to tutorize a few bouys would never suit J. J.”

“Ay, but ye may teach them to hont as well as farm,” observed Pigg. “Sink, you’ve nou’t to de but get a beuik and read a lesson aforehand yer-sel’; talk of strang lands, and light lands, and marle, and the rotation of crops; tell them if

wheat is full of poppies it's a sign o' poor land, and if full o' thistles, it's a sign o' good strang land, and se on."

"Vell, that seems all werry sensible," observed Mr. Jorrocks, "and wot they ought to know."

"Then ye can tell them the cause why gentlemen farmers never make money is that they all over-do the thing. If ye wish to profit by farmin', ye mun content yoursel' with tolerably clean fields, and good savin' crops; but, if ye stooody to ornament your farm wi' fine clipped hollin hedges, representin' booles, and horses, and sows, as ye de, or dinna clean your land till ye get a machine that will plough it and all, like Sloggers', or put sugar into drainin' tiles, like Tail, why ye *cannot* but lose. Land needs a sartain quantity of ploughin's and harrowin's, and a sartain quantity of muck, and will pay for all that; but if ye over-egg the puddin' the money's wasted, for the land may yield as good crops wi' five or six ploughin's as wi' ten; and ye may have ou'r strang crops, that the first wind or rain will lodge and lose ye the whole."

"*Humph!*" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, adding, "I think they must make you professor of agricultur' in the new college."

“Then, after you’ve talked all sich matters as these over, ye may say, ‘Now, gentlemen, there’s James Pigg i’ the yard wi’ the h’unds, and he’ll show ye how to find a hare settin’, and how to hunt her when she is f’und.”

“Ay, ay, I thought that would be the upshot of it all,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, with a smile; “they’ll be ’unting students—not mud-students—if you have anything to do with them.”

“And a varra good way to teach them farmin’ tee,” said Pigg.

Mr. Jorrocks re-entered Hillingdon Hall a sadder man than he set out. He found age creeping upon him, and that he was unfit for the life his earlier aspirations had sighed for; farming, which he thought was a sure fortune, seemed attended with no end of trouble; and he now felt that country life owed half its charms to frequent contrast with the crowded, heated, busy, bustling city.

“I’ll shut up shop!” exclaimed he, throwing himself into the judicial chair, “and return to Surrey and Great Coram Street. Winter’s a coming on, and I’m a gettin’ into the sere and yellow leaf. These farmin’ fools will never do for a man of intellect like me. Confound them!

they are a century and a half be'ind the Lunners: old Wopstraw, with his drawlin' 'upon the *who-o-ole*'—Willy Goodheart, with his year's arrears of news—and Mr. 'Eavytail, with his sugar-casks, and a voice enough to split a barn-door—*I'm tired on em all!*"

So saying, our worthy friend stuck out his legs, and throwing himself back in his chair, dozed for some time in silence. At length he got up and rang the bell.

"Send James Pigg here, Benjamin," said he, as soon as the boy came sneaking into the room, thinking Mr. J. had seen him stealing plums, and meant to convict him summarily, and inflict substantial justice upon him. Presently James made his appearance. He had been cleaning the bull's stall out, and showing him to some ladies.

"Vell, James," said Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing his tobacco-streaming mouth; "I've been a thinkin' this here farmin' don't exactly suit with me; not quite the ticket, in fact."

"*So*," said James, thinking he had soon tired.

"And I've been a thinkin'," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "as you seem full o' knowledge and science, of puttin' you in to manage and keep matters right, and then you can take mud

students, and teach them the difference atwixt a stick and a stone."

"So," said Pigg; adding, with a sniff of his nose across his hand, "to be hind, that's to say."

"No, you mustn't be be'ind," replied Mr. Jorrocks, with a shake of the head, "I must have so much rent accounted for every half year."

"Ne doot," said Pigg; "ne doot. But ar's to be manisher like; that's to say *hind*."

"Ah, 'ind! I twig," replied Mr. Jorrocks. "Bailiff, what we call."

"Why," said Pigg, "ar can de all that; but we munnut have ne sugar i' the drainin' tiles."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, not relishing the observation, and considering how he should put the next point. "Vell, then, you see," continued he, after a pause, "as Mrs. J. and myself will only be here now and then, jest by way of a leetle recreation, instead of buryin' ourselves alive altogether, so you'll have a deal to attend to out o' doors, and p'raps it will be well to get somebody to assist you in the 'ouse."

"Ar's warned ye," said Pigg; "ar's warn'd ye, 'specially if ar's to have the mud students."

"Then I was a thinkin'," observed Mr. Jor-

rocks, rubbing his chin and casting his eyes up to the mullioned ceiling of the room; "I was a thinkin' that Batsey, p'raps, might be useful to you."

"So," said Pigg.

"She's a fine woman," observed Mr. Jorrocks, "and I should like to place her in good hands."

"Ne doot," replied Pigg; "ne doot." Adding, "Why, ar dare say ar could manish her too."

"There'll be a *leetle* incambrance," observed Mr. Jorrocks, in an under tone.

"Why, why," replied Pigg, with a jerk of the head; "why, why." Adding, "Ar expects its mar *owne*."

"*Vot, another!*" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks. "Who'd ha' thought it?"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“ To be, or not to be : that is the question.”

IF ever man got well “ blessed” by woman, it was our fat friend, Mr. Jorrocks, for carrying away the Marquis of Bray—carrying him away, just as Mrs. Flather was bringing him “ to book.” Two minutes more, and she would have run into her game. As it was, she had nothing to do but con over what had passed, recalling the Marquis’s every word and look as he underwent the interesting scrutiny—how he said he got on very well with Emma—that the Duke thought very highly of her, and the Duchess liked her uncommonly.

Then she recalled her inquiry as to whether the Marquis had *spoken* to Emma yet, and half upbraided herself for not going a step further, and saying, “ about their intended marriage.” Still she consoled herself that her unmeaning look

was so significant, and the Marquis's answer, " that he had not spoken to Emma, because he thought he had better hear what Mrs. Flather had to say first ;" so conclusive as almost to render greater explicitness superfluous.

Like many over-anxious people, she banished such parts of the conversation from her mind as did not suit her purpose. She forgot that they had been talking about the proposed visit to Donkeyton, and that the subsequent conversation might in the Marquis's mind have had reference to that. This she either could not or did not choose to remember, because the short pause that followed, during which she was working herself up for the grand effort, seeming to her like an hour, she was pleased to consider it as such, and so to separate the parts of the conversation.

Emma also encouraged her in her self-deception; she had no doubt that the Marquis meant to offer—what else could he mean? Still the awkward fact presented itself, that he did not return to conclude the ceremony. A whole day passed over, and no tidings of his lordship; another succeeded—then a third—Mrs. Flather could contain herself no longer—she resolved to be doing, but somehow did not know what to do—

whether to write to the Marquis, or the Duke, or the Duchess, or go to Donkeyton Castle and take the bull fairly by the horns.

The latter was a bold step. No one ever went to Donkeyton without an invitation, or some very cogent reason. This latter Mrs. Flather certainly had, but whether it was the prudent course she could not decide. Mother and daughter had slight misgivings of each other's judgment, and each doubted the policy of the other. Emma thought she could have managed the Marquis better by herself; while her mother thought Emma wanted all the assistance she could give her.

No doubt Emma was right—she had all her mother's cunning, with double her tact, and would have worked the Marquis up to the point if she had only been allowed line and time. Mrs. Flather, like many old women, was in too great a hurry. Moreover, each had a slight misgiving, which neither cared to communicate to the other, that there might be some slight misconception or misunderstanding in the matter. Had either been acting separately, she would perhaps have given the weak parts more weight. It is extraordinary how a little assistance makes us believe anything we wish.

Mrs. Flather argued that the Marquis had gone as far as he ought without a specific declaration; and that he would have made one, but for the untimely intrusion of old Jorrocks. If, however, by any possibility, it could happen that such was not his intention, and he was only trifling with Emma's feelings, it was her undoubted duty to stop the thing immediately. If, again, as most probably was the case, the Marquis was anxious to make a declaration, the sooner the opportunity was afforded the better, and then the thing might be announced, and their friends could not feel hurt at one being made acquainted with it sooner than another. Ladies are very considerate in these matters.

"Upon the who-o-ole," as Johnny Wopstraw would say, Mrs. Flather determined to go to the castle. If she went, and things did not look promising, she could beat a retreat, under pretence of having gone on other business—a writership in India, or promotion for Edward.

The resolution being taken, the next thing was how to put it in execution. Whether to take Emma, or go alone, and how to get there. Emma's appearance might have a beneficial effect, par-

ticularly if they could be sure of meeting with the Marquis; but then, on the other hand, Emma would very likely insist upon having her own way, and Mrs. Flather wanted to have hers. Perhaps the best plan was not to broach the subject of Emma's going at all—take it for granted she could not.

“How to get there” then came on. “Neat carriages by the day, month, or year” are unknown in the country, and post-chaises are fast disappearing. Omnibuses are all the go. An omnibus for a pic-nic is all very well, but for a morning visit rather incongruous. Besides, they don't leave a certain line of road; all drawing towards the railway stations, as true as the needle to the pole.

Donkeyton Castle was clear of railways. You could not hear the sound of a whistle on the calmest day, or with the most favourable wind. The Duke had a great dislike to them—*monstrous* dislike. Would have thought the constitution destroyed if one had come near him—not his own constitution, but the constitution of the country. But to the tale. Question proposed—How to go?

Mr. Jorrocks's rattletrap would have been the

most convenient, that is to say, the cheapest conveyance, but then she was afraid if she applied for it, the squire would insist upon driving it himself, and very likely mar the object of her journey. Farm inspecting gives a man unlimited range over a country. The Sellborough glass chaise was the *dernier resort*; but then, how was she to get it? The post was gone, and she knew if she sent the boy in buttons on foot, he would never get back. She might beg the loan of Mr. Jorrocks's horse, and send him over on it. Accordingly, she wrote the following note:—

“ Dear Mr. Jorrocks,

“ Could you kindly accommodate me with the loan of your horse, for my servant to go to Sellborough, to get a prescription made up? He is a very careful rider, and will take great care of it.

Hoping dear Mrs. Jorrocks is well, I remain, with our united best regards, dear Mr. Jorrocks, yours most sincerely,

“ E. FLATHER.”

“ Humph!” grunted Mr. Jorrocks, as the above was handed to him in his bull house, where

he was busy with Pigg washing the Marquis. "*Humph!*" grunted he again, "rayther cool of her this. Batsey tells me, Mrs. F.'s Suzan told her, she heard her missis call me a vulgar old beast; and now she wants to borrow Dickey Cobden," added Mr. Jorrocks, in a tone that reached Pigg's ear as he turned the contents of the bucket into the manger.

"Ar wadn't be a woman's huss at nout?" observed Pigg, knocking the pail against the side to clean out the bottom.

"Nor I nouter," replied Mr. Jorrocks, turning sharp round, and making for the house to write an epistle while he was yet warm.

Having unlocked the great brass-bound mahogany desk, with "John Jorrocks" on the lid, he took a sheet of paper, and in a good round hand wrote the following answer:—

"Hillingdon Hall, to wit.

"Dear Mrs. F——. Three things I never lends—my oss, my wife, and my name. Howsomever, to-morrow being our beak-day, when us Jestices of our Sovereign Lady the Queen assemble to hear all manner of treasons, sorceries, burnin's, witchcrafts, felonies, puzzonin's, tres-

passes, and naughty be'aviour generally, if you'll send me the perscription, I'll be 'appy to bring the physic 'ome in my pocket. Meanwhile I sends you a couple of Seidletz, and if you want anythings else, Mrs. J. will be 'appy to lend you a few "Cockle's Antibilious" — werry extensively patronized. A leash o' Dukes, five brace o' Markisses, sixteen Earls, one-and-twenty Wiscounts, Barons, Lords, Bishops, and Baronets without end.

"Yours to serve,

"JOHN JORROCKS.

"J. P. and one of the quorum.

"P.S.—Dissolve the powder in the blue paper first, then add the white—stir em up, and drink while fizzin'."

Nothing daunted, though sore annoyed, Mrs. Flather then sent off the boy in buttons on foot with a note to the innkeeper, charging him to send the job-carriage, in the charge of a neat and steady driver, over with the bearer in the morning.

Accordingly, about nine o'clock, a wretched copy of a wretched original, a London glass coach, was seen crawling along, drawn by a pair of antediluvian-looking horses, a gray turned white, and a rat-tailed roan, driven by a postboy

transmogrified into a coachman—at least, as far as a napless hat, greasy-collared olive frock coat, short buff waistcoat, ornamented with rows of blue glass buttons, could counteract the effect of a pair of most palpable postboy's legs encased in the usual very long breeches and very short boots.

The carriage itself was a lofty old Landauet, built towards the close of the last century, and now containing little of the original material, save the round-about tub-shaped body. The leather top was hard, lustreless, and weather bleached, with large hollows formed between the ribbing of the roof, showing the high watermark of the last shower in the dust. All the plating had vanished from the side joints, and huge creases established themselves at the folds. Half the crests were knocked off the sides.

The body, as was said before, was of the washing-tub order, better adapted for concealing the inmates than for surveying the country. The windows were like pigeon holes, and the seat being low, a short person would just see the bobbing of the postboy's hat as he "rode and drove." On the present occasion he drove, being

seated on a lofty perch rising above the level of the roof.

Such was the vehicle that arrived at the Manse to convey Mrs. Flather to Donkeyton Castle.

A postboy's care of his horses being always considerable when there is anything to be got in the kitchen, our hero quickly unharnessed his, and had them in an outhouse, enjoying a pail of pump water between them, while he hobbled into the house in quest of cold meat and orders.

Mrs. Flather was in marching order, all but putting her bonnet on, and had been hard at work all the morning, undergoing a rigid examination from Emma as to what she would do and what she would say, the inquiry being adapted to every variety of circumstance that could be contemplated—just like one of Madame de Genlis' conversations in the immaculate "*Manuel du Voyageur*."

"Well, but if the Duchess is not at home, what will you do?"

"Oh, if she's not at home, and not likely to return soon, I suppose I must just come away," replied mamma.

"You wouldn't think of speaking to the Duke, I suppose," observed Emma, suggestingly.

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Flather, thinking the scheme not altogether unfeasible.

"But the Duke would most likely be away, too," said Emma.

"They are not likely to go far though, I think," rejoined mamma; "at least not more than a morning drive, for they never visit anybody further than calling, and then they only leave cards."

"They have begun to go in now," observed Emma.

"How do you know?" inquired Mrs. Flather.

"James told me so," replied Emma, affecting the familiar.

"They want to make themselves popular, I suppose," observed Mrs. Flather.

"Well, but if they are out," continued Emma, resuming the question, "will you wait till they return?"

"I suppose I must," replied Mrs. Flather, after a pause.

"I think I would," said Emma, musingly.

"Very well, my dear," assented Mrs. Flather, knowing that by going alone she could do as she pleased when she got there.

"*How awful!*" exclaimed Emma, clasping her hands, and turning her pretty eyes up to the ceiling, as she thought of her mamma sitting waiting the return of the Duchess.

"*It must be done,*" said Mrs. Flather, compressing her lips, and looking as solemn as her vacant countenance would permit. "You're *sure* he kissed you, now?" added she, glancing anxiously at the model of propriety.

"Oh, certain of that, and squeezed my hand, too," replied Emma, which she seemed to think about as material as the kiss. Kissing and squeezing are thought more of in the country than they are in London.

"I dare say it will be all right," said Mrs. Flather, encouragingly. "He's a young man, but his principles, I hope, are good; indeed, if I thought otherwise, I wouldn't let you marry him if he was an emperor."

"I dare say not," observed Emma, pettishly, thinking her mother might as well keep her rodomontade for Donkeyton Castle, her parent's maxim always having been "to get wealth and station, becomingly, if she could, but any how to get wealth and station;" a fine doctrine, and frequently acted upon.

“Supposing there’s any body with the Duchess when you go,” continued Emma, after a pause, during which she recovered her equanimity; “what will you do?”

“That’s not likely, I think,” replied Mrs. Flather; “nobody ever goes there, you know, without an invitation.”

“But there *may*,” continued Emma, “for all that. You don’t know what invitations she may have sent out; or, now that they are beginning to entertain, who may take upon themselves to call.”

“There’s nothing so bad as great people making themselves too common,” observed Mrs. Flather; a sentiment of very frequent use in the country, meaning that great people should just patronize ourselves and no one else.

“Nothing,” observed Emma. “I’m sure the Duke must feel he’s lost *caste* since he took up with that horrid old idiot down at the Hall.”

“Don’t *mention* him,” rejoined Mrs. Flather; “*abominable* old man! and, by the way, that reminds me, I wish you would walk down there this afternoon, and borrow their mouse-trap, for ours is all gone wrong, and the place is literally overrun with mice.”

“Now, tell me, how will you broach the sub-

ject," inquired Emma, again returning to her speculations. "Will you go at it at once, or nibble and beat about the bush a little?"

"Upon my word I really think I'd better go at once to the point," replied Mrs. Flather, after a pause.

"But I wouldn't go open-mouthed, as if you were bursting with anxiety," observed Emma.

"Oh, certainly not," replied Mrs. Flather, with a bend and toss of her head, as much as to say, "I know what I'm about."

"Will you say that you've come to talk to them about settlements, as if the thing was all fixed; or that you've come to talk about the—the—the—niceness of it, or something of that sort?" asked Emma.

"I don't know, I'm sure, my dear," considered Mrs. Flather; "much will depend upon how they receive me; if they are very affectionate, and so on, we may go to the point at once, but not, I think, about settlements."

"That would look mercenary, perhaps," observed Emma; "still I *should* like to have some diamonds."

"There's no doubt you'll have everything of that sort," rejoined Mrs. Flather.

“Necklace, and earrings, and a tiara. I should so like to go to the new year’s eve ball in diamonds—splendid diamonds! Jeems told me mamma’s cost seventy thousand,” observed Emma.

“That’s a great deal of money,” observed Mrs. Flather.

“I wonder if Mrs. Trotter would go to the winter ball if she knew I was to be there?” inquired Emma. “How delightful it would be if she was.”

Just then the old rattle-trap hove in sight, and the debate was forthwith adjourned for the more important business of “getting ready.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ Not yet on summer’s death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter.”

AFTER three “ put backs,” first to get her keys, which she had left on the drawers ; secondly, to tell Maria to roast the mutton instead of boiling it ; and thirdly, to charge Emma not to make herself sick at luncheon, and not to forget the mouse-trap, Mrs. Flather at length got under way.

The bright sun had warmed the air of the autumnal day, and the country round was in the rich luxuriance of declining beauty. The corn fields were clear, the leaves were changing colour, and an occasional gun-shot echoed upon the clear transparent atmosphere. Mrs. Flather, having had the landaulet head put back, settled herself in the middle of the chaise, and hoisting her green parasol, prepared to gather her faculties for the approaching conflict.

On they jingled, but just as a white three-armed guide-post denoted the divergence of the road to three different points, a loud "*Hooi ! stop !*" from behind, caused the driver to pull his horses up with such a jerk as sent Mrs. Flather forward against the front—she nearly broke her nose !

Another second, and her old tormentor, Mr. Jorrocks, had his old rattle-trap alongside the carriage, and was putting his whip into the case preparatory to having a confab.

" Vell, Mrs. Flather," said he, with one of his knowing grins, " and vot are *you* arter with your pair 'oss chay? Takin' your medecine in a wehicle, as the doctors write on their labels, eh?" added he with a leer.

" Oh, Mr. Jorrocks, how do you do?" exclaimed Mrs. Flather, shuffling herself back into her seat, and interposing her parasol between herself and the Squire.

" Vell, and wot's 'appen'd now?" asked Mr. Jorrocks, reaching over and lifting it up, so as to get a view of her face. " Where are you a goin' to? Sellborough, I dare say," added he, without waiting for an answer. " Am a goin' there myself—better come in here with me. Binjimin shall get in there," continued he, unhooking the

apron of the fire-engine for the purpose of letting Mrs. Flather in.

“ Oh, thank you, Mr. Jorrocks, thank you ! ” exclaimed she, “ but I’m not going to Sellborough ; I’m much obliged to—up this other road—here to the right—to the left I mean, thank you ; or I should have been most happy.”

“ And *that’s* the Sellborough road,” replied our friend. “ I knew you was a goin’ there. Come, get in—get in ! It’s no use you and I ‘umbuggin’ each other.”

“ I meant the other road ! I meant the other road ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Flather. “ The road to the far left,” continued she extending her arm in that direction.

“ She’s a goin’ to Donkeyton Castle,” whispered Benjamin from the back seat into his master’s ear.

“ Donkeyton Castle ! ” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks aloud. “ Vot, you are a goin’ to Donkeyton Castle, are you ? ” asked Mr. Jorrocks. “ Vot’s a taken you there ? — thought you’d been a goin’ to the chemists. Has the Duke a blow out ? Has the Duke a blow out ? ”

“ I’m going *towards* Donkeyton ; I’m going *towards* Donkeyton,” replied Mrs. Flather, anxious to get away from her tormentor.

“ *Towards* Donkeyton,” grunted Mr. Jorrocks; “ *towards* Donkeyton,” repeated he, adding aloud to himself, “ who *can* she be goin’ to see there.”

“ Well, good morning, Mr. Jorrocks, good morning,” repeated Mrs. Flather, adding, as she desired the coachman to go on, “ I’m only wasting your valuable time.”

“ ‘Ang the time,” at length observed Mr. Jorrocks, taking the whip out of the case and gathering the reins together, preparatory to setting Dickey Cobden a going again. “ Where *can* the ‘ooman be goin’ to? ” mused he, his eye following the receding chaise.

“ She’s a goin’ to Donkeyton Castle, I *tells* you again,” said Benjamin from the back of the chaise.

“ Impossible, Binjimin ! ” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks.

“ But she is *though*,” replied Benjamin in a confident tone.

“ And ‘ow do you know that, Binjimin? ” asked Mr. Jorrocks, jerking and flopping Dickey Cobden into motion.

“ ‘Cause I was hup at their ‘ouse when their young man came back with the chay, and he’d

peep'd into the note and seen the horder," replied Benjamin.

"*So-o-o!*" ejaculated Mr. Jorrocks, "there must be somethin' goin' on—some leetle mystery, I guess;" and, musing and wondering what it could be, Mr. Jorrocks proceeded on his way to Sellborough.

There had been a great dinner at Donkeyton Castle the day before, and some of the outer ring visitors having accepted the Duke's invitation to visit his example farm, the last rattle-traps had hardly jingled under the Gothic arch of the battlemented gateway, when Mrs. Flather appeared at the opposite side for admittance. The porter stared as he threw back the old nail-studded oak doors, and his wife observed with a significant smile, that "She wished the lady mightn't be a day after the fair."

On Mrs. Flather crawled, at that weary, dilapidated pace that ill-fed, hardworked horses exhibit—walking, if it were not for the appearance of trotting—along the winding drive through the undulating and picturesque scenery of the richly wooded, water-glittering park.

It was a lovely place. Hundreds of deer herded on its hills, or followed in lengthy files

along its ravines; while water-fowl of every description splashed or sported on the extensive lakes, where snow-white swans were gliding majestically about, or noble herons rising slowly and noiselessly to heaven.

The now browning fern and faded heath waved and drooped on the wilder ground, affording shelter to the game and adding wildness to the scene.

It is odd how few visitors at great houses see the beauties of the places. In going, they are generally in too great a fright; the ladies pulling on their clean gloves—the gentlemen adjusting their whiskers or neckcloths. In returning, they are apt to get clear of the premises ere they have done congratulating themselves and each other on their escape; applauding their courage and sagacity in going, and commenting on their great patrons' marked attention to themselves. Some people really seem as if they expected to be "catermauchously chawn up" by great people, as the Americans say.

Mrs. Flather saw nothing. As the rattling of the carriage on the pavement under the arch announced her arrival at the awe-striking castle gates, she gathered herself into a state of desperate compression, and sat eyeing the front joints of

the old landaulet, now folded before her, with all the energy of a person enjoying a dentist's arm-chair.

Grind, creak, grind, creak, went the old vehicle over the Kensington gravell'd carriage-road. *Jip!* crack, flop, went the persuasive Jehu to the pottering screws; coachey looking more lively as the emblazon'd banner on the castle glitter'd in the sun, and bespoke good cheer within.

At length the carriage sounded on the moss-grown walls of the stately castle, as it drove past the open cloisters at the side.

The driver, having deliberately thrown his reins upon the horses' backs (as if in the fullest confidence that they would not run away), descended, whip in hand, from his perch, and applied his hand with the greatest *nonchalance* to the bronze bell handle in the richly carved doorway, with far different feelings to those which now agitated the bosom of his fair passenger.

"Please, marm, who shall I ax for?" inquired he, limping back to the carriage, with a grin at the peel that answered his pull.

Ere Mrs. Flather had time to reply to the inquiry, the lace bedizened porter loomed large in the door-way. He was the *beau ideal* of a

porter—great, big, broad, stout, over-fed looking fellow, with well-powdered bald head, pimply nose, and swelling ankles—a spoiled figure footman! Having eyed the wretched vehicle and the humble charioteer, whose old olive-coloured coat assumed a still dingier hue, by the bright pea-green Ducal livery, the porter standing in the first position in the exact centre of the top door step, with upthrown head, indicated that he was ready to answer questions.

“Is your missis at home?” asked the driver without waiting for Mrs. Flather’s instructions.

“Is the *Duchess* of Donkeyton at home?” inquired Mrs. Flather.

“*Who is it?*” asked the porter of the coachman.

“Mrs. Flather,” replied he.

“*Not at home,*” rejoined the porter, with a slight inclination towards a bow.

“I have particular business with the Duchess of Donkeyton,” exclaimed Mrs. Flather, in a state of desperation.

“Perhaps you’d have the kindness to send in your name,” observed the porter, advancing a couple of steps, so as to be able to announce into

the carriage, without unnecessarily exerting himself, "that her Grace was rather indisposed, but perhaps she would be able to see her."

Mrs. Flather having dived into her bag, and fished up a carved ivory case, produced a card, with which the porter presented a footman to hand to the groom of the chamber to carry to the Duchess.

Who shall describe her feelings as she waited his return?

Her Grace was in the drawing-room, superintending the arrangement of her portfolios, after the over-hauling of the previous evening's party. Castles were joining cascades, and sea views coalescing with sun-sets. Her first impression, on seeing the card was, that Mrs. Flather had made a mistake, and come the day after she was invited. This idea, however, was quickly set at rest by inspecting the lists of invited, accepted, and refused, which ended in the Duchess desiring the servant to show Mrs. Flather in. The unfortunate performer of her toils, yclept companion, made her exit through an invisible door in the richly gilt walls as Mrs. Flather sidled through the half-opened folding ones at the far end.

Her Grace of course was charmed to see her,

and restored confidence to her now palpitating heart, by that easy affability and kindness of manner almost invariably the attribute of the high born. Nay more, it cheered Mrs. Flather onward in her course ; and before the Duchess had run over the common places relative to the weather, the roads, and the distance, the parching dryness that almost prevented utterance as Mrs. Flather entered gradually dissolved, and she sat by the side of the awe-inspiring Duchess far more at her ease than she would have been in conclave with Mrs. Trotter.

Conversation with people one really has nothing to say to soon comes short up, and the Duchess presently looked at Mrs. Flather, in hopes that she would "lead the gallop," as they say at Newmarket. Twice Mrs. Flather faltered. "Your Grace," was all she uttered before the tongue-tying dryness again assailed her ; and the Duchess at last tried to turn her to her old friend the portfolio, in hopes of engaging her till luncheon was announced.

"Your Grace," again attempted Mrs. Flather with the desperate energy of a person bent on a subject, "I am sure you, as a mother, will excuse the ——."

Her Grace was surprised at Mrs. Flather's vehemence. She was too high bred a woman to be put out of her way, and had, besides, a certain constitutional inclination for taking things easy. Mrs. Flather, being wound up, proceeded.

"I am sure I need not say," continued she, "how deeply I appreciate the honour conferred on my poor girl."

Her Grace smiled and bowed courteously, thinking it merely had reference to the party she had had them to, and said "Pray don't mention it."

This rather put Mrs. Flather out, and her Grace was just going to draw her attention to the flower-stand beaming radiant before the window—another safety valve for country stupidity—when Mrs. Flather again went on.

"It is certainly a most unexpected—a most unlooked-for honour," said she, drawing her best cambric handkerchief out of her bag; "but I trust Emma will so conduct herself as to prove she is not unworthy of the high confidence your Grace and the Duke have reposed in her."

The Duchess was "quite sure she would; indeed, they both thought most highly of her. She was a remarkably fine girl. Wish Mrs. Flather had brought her with her."

This was great encouragement to Mrs. Flather. She proceeded to explain that it was merely a point of delicacy that had prevented her doing so, but that after the kind assurance her Grace had given, of course there could be no difficulty about it, and she would take a very early opportunity of doing so.

“Her Grace hoped she would—would always be most happy to see them,” making a knot in her mind at the same time, to tell the servants to deny them.

Luncheon was then announced.

“Your Grace, perhaps, wouldn’t like it to take place very soon?” said Mrs. Flather, still sticking to her seat.

“O, any time,” said her Grace, motioning her to obey the summons. “Wouldn’t she take a little luncheon?”

Mrs. Flather, however, having heard that “any time was no time,” thought she might as well get that point settled.

“It will require a good deal of preparation,” observed she, rising and standing by her chair with her right hand resting on the back.

The Duchess stared, wondering if Mrs. Flather hought she was invited to stay.

“I mean that the settlements, and such-like, will take some time doing.”

“*Settlements!*” exclaimed the Duchess, staring with astonishment.

“O, just as your Grace pleases,” replied Mrs. Flather most submissively; “of course we don’t insist upon anything of the sort.”

“I fear we misunderstand each other,” said the Duchess, reconsidering all that had passed. “It surely isn’t Jeems you’re thinking about? *It can’t* be Jeems!” added she, as the ancestry of twenty generations flashed upon her mind. Mrs. Flather felt as if she would drop through the floor before the Duchess’s withering glance.

“My dear Mrs. Flather,” said she, in a low tone, pressing her on the arm to get her to resume her seat; “my dear Mrs. Flather, I fear there is some misunderstanding between the Marquis of Bray and yourself. Of course, I don’t know what has passed between you, or what reasons he may have given your daughter to think he is attached to her, but I must tell you, as a friend”—and the Duchess said it in the kindest manner possible; “I must tell you as a friend, that it would be the death of the Duke to mention such a thing to him.”

“But his Grace encouraged it!” exclaimed Mrs. Flather, in the greatest agitation.

“*Impossible*, my dear Mrs. Flather!” replied the Duchess, calmly but firmly. “Impossible, I assure you; you must be under a mistake. The Duke is too proud; has too great regard for his station to think of such a thing; far too much regard!

“Nay, then,” said Mrs. Flather, despondingly—

“Here is the Duke,” observed the Duchess, as his grace popped his snow-wreathed head into the door, to see what kept the Duchess away from her luncheon.

“Here’s Mrs. Flather, my dear!” exclaimed the Duchess, as he was jerking back, in hopes he had not been observed.

“Ah, Mrs. Flather!” exclaimed he, with the gaiety of sham delight, as he thought of the hot chicken he had left uncovered. “My dear Mrs. Flather,” repeated he, advancing up the spacious room, with extended hands, to give her a hearty welcome—“how do you do?” said he, seizing her by both—“glad to see you, *monstrous* glad to see you; come and have a little luncheon; on the table, quite ready.” So saying, his Grace bowed, and waved, and drove her

along into the privacy of viands and powdered menials.

The Duchess followed.

“And how are you all at home?” asked the Duke, as he helped Mrs. Flather to a wing and a piece of the breast of one of his own high-fed Dorkings. “Fine fowl, that; monstrous fine fowl,” said he; “reared at my own farm, great farmer, monstrous great farmer. Potatoes of my own growing too,” said he, as a footman handed a dish of fine white mealy ones to the appetiteless Mrs. Flather. “And how is Mr. Jorrocks? neighbour of yours, isn’t he? good neighbour, monstrous good neighbour I should think.”

“*Very* good neighbour *indeed*, your Grace,” replied Mrs. Flather, with an emphasis, seeing which way the wind blew.

“Clever man,” said his Grace, putting the first mouthful of the delicate white meat, with the nicely-browned outside, into his mouth. “Monstrous clever man,” continued he, chewing away. “And how’s his bull?”

“Quite well, I believe, your Grace,” replied Mrs. Flather.

“Fine bull,” said his Grace; “monstrous fine bull—got premium I saw in the papers.”

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"Take a glass of sherry with me — there's Madeira if you prefer it," said his Grace, seeing Mrs. Flather played with her luncheon. "Your good health," said his Grace, bowing, and drinking off his wine at two gulps.

* * * * *

"And how's your daughter?" asked his Grace, after a pause, as he worked away at the chicken, and considered whether the daughter belonged to Mrs. Flather or to Mr. Jorrocks. His Grace knew there was a daughter between them, but he had never been able to get the confusion of the chaise arrangement set right in his head.

"Quite well, I'm much obliged to your Grace," replied Mrs. Flather, with fervour.

"Fine girl," said his Grace, "monstrous fine girl," added he, cutting again at the chicken.

That observation determined Mrs. Flather to make one effort with the Duke, ere she gave up all hopes. Accordingly she recollected all her scattered energies, and prepared for the first opening she saw after they left the luncheon room. It was some time before the Duke gave her a chance. He jabbered and talked so fast

about flowers, fruits, pheasants, foot-stools, farming, that she could hardly get a word in sideways. At last, he got back to Jorrocks and Hillingdon.

“And how does Mr. Jorrocks acquit himself on the bench?” asked the Duke. “Good magistrate, monstrous good magistrate, I should think,” added he, answering himself—“keeps the country quiet, I dare say; peaceable, respectable; good thing to have an active magistrate in your neighbourhood, monstrous good thing.”

“Oh, Mr. Jorrocks is an excellent magistrate!” exclaimed Mrs. Flather, as soon as she was allowed an opportunity.

“And a good neighbour, I make no doubt,” added the Duke; “sociable, agreeable, sensible,” thinking Mr. Jorrocks would be like himself.

“Most agreeable man!” exclaimed Mrs. Flather.

“Great farmer, I suppose?” observed the Duke; “talented farmer, monstrous talented farmer; disciple of Smith of Deanston’s? Smith is the greatest benefactor the world ever saw; monstrous benefactor!”

“The Marquis of Bray is a great farmer, isn’t he,” asked Mrs. Flather, seizing the opportunity.

"O, Jeems is a great farmer—monstrous great farmer," replied his Grace with a series of nods of the head—"fond of guinea-pigs—monstrous fond of guinea-pigs—has a whole drove up at Mrs. Jobson's."

"His lordship was kind enough to express his partiality for my daughter," observed Mrs. Flather with desperate resolution.

"Did he indeed," exclaimed his Grace, not exactly catching the sentence Mrs. Flather's hurried articulation rendered doubtful. "Good judge—monstrous good judge," added the Duke, thinking he would beat a retreat to his country paper, "The Dozey Independent," which was published that day.

"I am glad it meets your Grace's approbation," observed the emboldened Mrs. Flather.

"Quite, I assure you," said his Grace—"good thing—monstrous good thing indeed."

"Well, I think there is nothing like young people settling early in life," rejoined Mrs. Flather.

"*Nothing* like it!" said his Grace, "nothing like it," repeated he, looking at his watch. "However, I am sorry I must bid you good morning," added he, with a feigned start as

if he had discovered he was behind time. "I have a despatch from the Home Office: the Duchess will be glad to take a walk with you—show you the aviary—the goold fish—Jeem's rabbits—her Italian greyhounds:" so saying, with a wave of the hand towards where the now horrified Duchess stood, his Grace sidled and backed out of the drawing-room.

Mrs. Flather was not a great hand at reading physiognomies, or she would have seen astonishment and indignation mantling on the Duchess's brow. As it was, she thought she had rather got a "crow" over her—the Duke having so eagerly ratified what her Grace had so lately derided.

"The Duke, you see, is quite in favour of the match," observed she, advancing towards the Duchess with a smile on her vacant countenance.

Her grace deigned no reply.

"I'm sure," continued she, rather taken aback by the Duchess's manner, "it will be our study to please and make ourselves agreeable—and—and—to your Grace—"

The Duchess bowed slightly.

"It is an honour we had no right perhaps to aspire to," simpered Mrs. Flather; "but I hope we shall conduct ourselves becomingly. I'm

sure," added she, "I hope it may be many years before my daughter occupies your Grace's place." The Duchess bridled up, but still held her peace. "The Duke, too, I'm sure I hope he may live a long time," simpered Mrs. Flather; "no two people I can assure you, your Grace, can be less desirous of an early change than my daughter and myself." The same provoking silence greeted this handsome announcement.

"Titles are nothing compared to happiness," simpered Mrs. Flather; "I would'nt my daughter should marry a prince if he were not a man of good principles."

"Really, Mrs. Flather," said her Grace, unable any longer to contain herself; "you must allow me to tell you that you are labouring under a strong delusion."

"How so, your Grace?" and Mrs. Flather stared.

"In the first place, in supposing that our son would ever think of marrying your daughter; and in the second place, in supposing that the Duke and myself would ever sanction such a thing."

"But he stated his positive delight at the prospect of it, not two minutes ago," exclaimed Mrs. Flather with the most determined confidence.

“ You quite misunderstood him,” said the Duchess; “ you quite misunderstood him,” repeated she; “ the Duke is the last man in the world to approve—nay *hear*—of an unequal match. “ What ! ” exclaimed the Duchess, her eyes flashing as she spoke, “ the representative of twenty generations throwing himself away in such a manner ! ”

Mrs. Flather was dumbfounded.

“ No, my dear Mrs. Flather,” continued her Grace, her features softening as she proceeded, “ let me advise you to get rid of the idea—dismiss it from your mind—it can only make your daughter and every one concerned ridiculous.”

“ I could’nt use the Duke so badly, so ungratefully,” replied Mrs. Flather, now fully impressed with the idea that the Duchess was deceiving her.

“ *I again assure you*, you misunderstood the Duke,” observed her grace; “ or the Duke misunderstood *you*. He is rather deaf, and perhaps did not hear what you said.”

Mrs. Flather looked incredulous.

“ I assure you it is the case.”

Mrs. Flather was silent. She still doubted. The Duchess, she thought, must be deceiving her.

The Duke seemed to expect the observation, and to jump at it. His manner, too, was most impressive when she arrived — most affectionate. The Duchess saw the turn things were taking in Mrs. Flather's mind, and gave her time to think them over.

“Would you like to see the Duke again?” at length said she, “and ask him the question yourself?”

Mrs. Flather muttered something about “Mistake somewhere. The Duchess might be mistaken, perhaps.”

“But is it likely,” inquired her Grace, “that on a subject so deeply affecting the interests—nay, the happiness—of our son, that there should be any mystery or misconception between the Duke and myself?”

Mrs. Flather was silent; she thought it more evident that the Duchess wanted to get rid of her and try and dissuade the Duke from it.

“Nay, you are a mother yourself,” observed the Duchess; “would you, if your husband was alive, have any concealments from him on such a subject?”

“Certainly not,” said Mrs. Flather, who had always prided herself upon being a pattern wife.

"But your Grace and the Duke may differ on the point," boldly observed the aspiring mother.

"Nothing of the sort, I assure you," rejoined the Duchess, most emphatically ; "nothing of the sort, I assure you. The Duke and I have no secrets, no disagreements on any subject."

Mrs. Flather didn't know what to say.

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"Let us take a turn on the terrace," at length said the Duchess, really feeling for Mrs. Flather's situation. "Forget what has passed," said she, rising, "and it shall never be mentioned or referred to by me."

"Well," said Mrs. Flather, in a tone of despair, still thinking it was a *ruse* of the Duchess's to get her away.

"But don't let me take you if you would like to see the Duke again on the subject," observed her Grace, reading reluctance on Mrs. Flather's countenance.

"Well," said she, after a pause, during which she thought of the enormous stake she was playing for—a coronet and coach and six—the distinction of strawberry leaves not being much understood, a coronet being a coronet in the country ; when she thought, we say, of the stake she

was playing for, she resolved not to lose a chance. "Well," said she, "in so important and delicate an affair, an affair involving the happiness of my daughter, perhaps her life—for I will not deny that her affections are deeply engaged—I really think I should not be acting right were I not to avail myself of your Grace's proposition; not that I in the slightest degree doubt the—the—the accuracy of your Grace's assertion—at least not the—the—the accuracy of your Grace's belief that the Duke is—is—is—I dare say your Grace knows what I mean; but still, in so delicate a matter I'm sure you'll forgive the feelings of a mother, and——" here she applied her cambric to her eyes.

The Duchess assured her she could make every allowance for her. If seeing the Duke again would satisfy her, she would advise her by all means to do so. She would find him in the library, and she would either accompany her or not as she liked; meanwhile Mrs. Flather had better compose herself, and thereupon the Duchess urged her to sit down, knowing, as she well did, that the Duke abominated a scene. Perhaps the Duchess thought that a little reflection might make Mrs. Flather think better of it, but there

she was mistaken, an old woman being as bad to turn as a sheep.

Mrs. Flather sat counting the silk fringe on her shawl, giving herself a certain length, and settling that if the bunches came even it should be a sign of luck; and if odd, the reverse. She had got through her task, and declared for even, when the radiance the circumstance threw into her countenance made the Duchess think she was ready for something, and accordingly she addressed her by inquiring what she would like to do.

"Oh, to see the Duke, by all means," observed Mrs. Flather, now more than ever convinced that the Duchess was deceiving her.

"He is in the library," observed her Grace; "would you like me to go in and tell him what you want to speak to him about, or shall I accompany you, and leave you to broach the subject yourself?"

Mrs. Flather would rather have gone by herself, but she had no notion of letting the Duchess have the first word, very likely prejudicing, or may be intimidating, the Duke. However, as she could not well tell her Grace she would rather have nothing to do with her, she very politely

begged she would not give herself the trouble of going, if she would just show her where his Grace was, she would not trouble her Grace any further.

The Duchess assented, and led the way to the library.

CHAPTER XXXV.

————— “ Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour Mrs. Flather stole.”

THE Duke of Donkeyton, on retiring to the library after the exertions of the luncheon table, “Dozey Independent” in hand, had thrown himself into the deep recesses of the easiest of the many easy chairs with which the apartment was supplied. In truth, it was a noble chair—a chair well becoming a duke. The curiously carved, black oak frame-work glided on the highest finished castors ; while the back, sides, and arms were stuffed with puffy, rich-cut velvet cushions, with invisible springs. Though copied from the antique, it had none of the inconvenient height or inverse propensities of the original. On the contrary, the Duke’s head just rubbed above the back cushion, as in the abandon of his easy hour he stuck his legs out before him, straight as a deal-board, or a lay-figure in a studio.

Here, in one of the deep recesses formed by the

windows in the massive walls, the Duke was in the habit of wheeling himself just sufficiently far to enable him to enjoy the perfume of the flowers wafting from the terrace, and the scenery of the distant hills, without being visible to those below.

A little more luncheon than he usually eat, with a little more talk than he usually indulged in, together with the extreme heat of the day, aided perhaps by the autumnal dulness of his newspaper and the seductive qualities of the easy chair, had sent his Grace off in a nap sooner than usual; and when the Duchess and Mrs. Flather entered the room, his shining bald-head appeared above the crimson, bullion-fringed cushion in such a position as, without the deep snore he every now and then emitted, clearly proclaimed that his Grace slept.

He was quite comfortable. His mouth was wide open, his legs were stretched out before him, his eye-glasses hung on his unbuttoned buff-waistcoat as they had fallen from his nose, and the well-ironed "Dozey Independent" stood from the carpet just touching his right hand, as it hung negligently over the chair side. A large

blue-bottled fly buzzed and bumped and noised about the room, now exploring the Duke's bald head, now settling on his nose, now apparently determining to enter his noble mouth. The impudence of a "blue-bottle" passes all comprehension.

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"Perhaps we had better not disturb his Grace," observed Mrs. Flather in a whisper.

Mr. Flather used not to like being disturbed when making his sermons, and Mrs. Flather recollected this.

"O, he'll not mind," replied the Duchess in her usual tone, thinking to awake him by the noise.

A loud snore.

The blue-bottle buzzed away, making a small circuit in the air—scared perhaps by the intruders. They proceeded slowly and noiselessly over the soft Turkey carpet, Mrs. Flather half inclined to stop the Duchess, lest awaking the Duke should have a prejudicial effect. Before she could make up her mind to do so, however, the Duchess had reached the occupant of the easy chair, and placing her hand on his shoulder, gave him a half sort of shake, with—"Jeems,

my dear, here is Mrs. Flather wishes to speak to you." Just then the blue-bottle, after buzzing round about the Duke's nose, had paid a visit to his nostril, and his Grace started in his chair with a perfect cannon of a sneeze.

"*Ah-whitz !*" sneezed the Duke again, as if he would blow himself to pieces. "*Ah-whitz !*" repeated he, getting up and diving into his pocket for his handkerchief. "*Ah-whitz !*" he went again, with the water streaming from his eyes.

Mrs. Flather trembled for her mission.

"*Ah-whitz ! ah-whitz ! ah-whitz !*" sneezed the Duke in succession. "*Cold—monstrous bad cold,*" said he, mopping his eyes.

"Mrs. Flather wishes to see you, my dear," observed the Duchess, amidst a tremendous "*Ah-whitz*" from his Grace.

"*Me !*" exclaimed the Duke, in astonishment, "*Ah-whitz !* What can she want with me?" "*ah-whitz,*" said he, smothering his face in his handkerchief.

The Duchess fearing his Grace might say something he ought not, here drew Mrs. Flather forward, and when the Duke took his face out of its Bandana bed, his would-be relative was full before him.

"Ah, my dear Mrs. Flather, how do you do?" asked his Grace, offering one hand while he mopped his face with the other; "*glad to see you—very glad to see you.*" His Grace could not say "monstrous," for where is the man who likes to be interrupted in a sneeze. "Hope you are all well at home," asked his Grace, running on in the usual form.

"Quite well, I'm much obliged to your Grace," replied Mrs. Flather, nothing disconcerted at his apparent forgetfulness of her. "I wish to speak a few words to your Grace respecting my daughter," faltered Mrs. Flather, amid a long protracted *ah-whitz* from his Grace.

"She's quite well, I hope!" observed his Grace. "*Ah-whitz*—oh, I beg your pardon—*ah-whitz*—I saw you before," he added, giving his nose a final blow, and returning his handkerchief to his pocket. "Got a bad cold—monstrous bad cold," said he, shutting back the window. "Susan, my dear, what time have you ordered the carriage?" The Duke thought to give Mrs. Flather a hint, but she was not a person to take one.

"Mrs. Flather wishes to have a little conversation with you, my love," observed the Duchess.

"Pray sit down," said the Duke, wheeling Mrs. Flather in a chair as he buttoned up his waistcoat. "Wants a commission for a son, I suppose," thought he to himself, forgetting she had just told him it was her daughter she wanted to speak about. Mrs. Flather looked at the Duchess, and was silent. Her Grace then withdrew. Mrs. Flather seated herself.

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"It is a very delicate subject I've come to speak to your Grace about," observed Mrs. Flather, arranging the fringe of her shawl on her knee, and dressing it out as she spoke; "but I'm sure your Grace will excuse the freedom I have taken."

"Make no apology," observed his Grace. "Make no apology," repeated he, encouragingly.

"You are doubtless aware," continued Mrs. Flather, still arranging her fringe as she spoke, "that there has been a certain something going on for some time between my daughter and your son."

"*What, Jeems!*" exclaimed the Duke, starting, and staring with astonishment.

"The Marquis of Bray," faltered Mrs. Flather, staggered at the Duke's amazement.

"*Indeed!*" exclaimed the Duke, in a subdued tone, adding, with a solemn shake of the head, "sorry to hear it—monstrous sorry to hear it."

Mrs. Flather was nonplussed. The parching dryness again closed her lips, and she sat pulling at the shawl fringe till she drew out a bunch.

"Well," said the Duke, wheeling his chair nearer to hers as she achieved this feat, "tell me all about it. When did it happen?"

"Oh, it's been going on for some time," sobbed Mrs. Flather, drawing her cambric from her bag.

The Duke paused to let her have her cry.

"Well," said the Duke, when she seemed about done, "I'm sorry for it, monstrous sorry for it. Jeems is a naughty boy—monstrous naughty boy; am angry with Jeems—monstrous angry with Jeems; had no business to do anything of the sort—gave him my Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, with the passage recommending young men to attach themselves to married women, underlined in red ink, and marked in the margin. Great pity—monstrous great pity," added the Duke, with a succession of nods of the head—"fine girl—monstrous fine girl. However, I'll tell you what," continued

he, in an under tone to Mrs. Flather, laying his hand confidentially on her arm, "*it's no use making a row about it — the less said the better.*"

"Indeed!" sobbed Mrs. Flather, pulling out another bunch of fringe.

"No," said the Duke, with another batch of shakes and shrugs, "*none whatever.*"

Mrs. Flather sobbed in silence.

"I'll tell you what," said the Duke, "the best thing you can do is to take her abroad — go a little tour — up the Rhine — into Switzerland — down to Milan — on to Florence if you like. I'll pay the expenses — draw upon me for five hundred, a thousand if you like. May marry her, perhaps — Swiss colonel — Italian count — French general — no saying; fine girl — monstrous fine girl; but if you don't, why you'll come back at the end of a certain time, and no one will know anything about it — be any the wiser. These sort of things are unpleasant, no doubt — monstrous unpleasant; but accidents will happen — youthful indiscretion — more cautious in future; sorry for it, I assure you — monstrous sorry for it; but rely upon it, it's no use making

a row about it—*hush it up—hush it up*—as the Duke of Wellington said.”

“ But your Grace misunderstands me,” said Mrs. Flather, as soon as the Duke’s fringed face began to settle on his shoulders: “ your Grace misunderstands me, I think,” repeated she, “ it’s my daughter’s affections the Marquis has engaged ; and—”

“ I understand,” interrupted the Duke—“ perfectly understand ; but what can we do, you know ? What can we do ? ”

“ I supposed it was with your Grace’s knowledge,” sobbed Mrs. Flather.

“ Not at all I assure you, not at all,” rejoined his Grace ; “ on the contrary, always recommended Chesterfield to Jeems. Good book—monstrous good book : Chesterfield knew the world. But, however, what’s done can’t be helped.”

“ But he came over to Hillingdon with your Grace’s knowledge, I suppose ? ” asked Mrs. Flather.

“ Undoubtedly he did,” replied the Duke ; “ undoubtedly he did : but that was to see old Mr. Jorrocks—talk about farming—improve the

breed of husbandry horses—study agricultural chemistry, and so on. I suppose then had been the time he had come over your daughter.”

“ Oh, it was only talking,” observed Mrs. Flather, anxious to remove the impression under which the Duke laboured.

“ Only talking!” said the Duke with surprise; “ talking’s nothing—talking’s nothing.”

“ It’s a great deal to an innocent young country girl, your Grace,” observed Mrs. Flather.

“ Don’t see why it should,” said the Duke, “ don’t see why it should. Of course it depends a good deal upon what is said,” added he.

“ Of course,” replied Mrs. Flather. “ He certainly gave Emma to understand that he was very much attached to her.”

“ Foolish boy, foolish boy,” observed the Duke, with a series of nods of the head; “ however, there is no putting old heads on young shoulders. I remember my poor father—the eighth Duke—heaven rest him!—saying the very same thing to me—‘ No putting old heads on young shoulders;’ and so it will be to the end of the chapter—so it will be to the end of the chapter.”

Mrs. Flather measured the fringe with her knuckle. It was three-quarters of a yard.

A long silence ensued.

“ Well, I suppose we can make nothing better of it,” at length said the Duke with a yawn, wishing Mrs. Flather would take her departure.

“ Then I fear we cannot make anything better of it,” at length said Mrs. Flather, remeasuring the fringe, and looking intently at the Duke.

“ Upon my word, there seems to be nothing to make better of,” observed the Duke. “ There’s no harm done that I can see.”

“ None, if your Grace encourages the match,” observed Mrs. Flather, boldly.

“ *Encourage the match!*” exclaimed the Duke, starting up. “ What! Jeems marry a com-moner! — a — a — a — IMPOSSIBLE!” And the Duke stamped as though he would rouse his dormant ancestry to avenge the insult.

Mrs. Flather shook with fear. What might have followed must remain matter of surmise; for, fortunately, the Duchess’s pride could no longer restrain her curiosity; and she returned to the library just at the critical moment. She had advanced far up the spacious apartment before either party was aware of her presence. The Duke saw her first.

“ Susan, my dear!” exclaimed he in a tow-

ering passion, "Mrs. Flather has done us the honour, of coming here to claim our son in marriage for her daughter."

"Indeed!" replied the Duchess mildly, well-knowing there was no occasion for them both to set on her at once.

"Compliment! great compliment! monstrous great compliment! is'nt it?" asked the Duke, white as his whiskers.

"Perhaps, if you are satisfied *now*," observed the Duchess, with an emphasis, to Mrs. Flather, "you had better retire; his Grace is not very well to-day," added she, in an under tone, "and does not like to be disturbed."

Mrs. Flather took the hint and trotted away with the Duchess, nothing loath to leave the obstreperous Duke.

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"I think I would like to go home," said Mrs. Flather, half sick with mortification; "if you will allow me to ring for my carriage," continued she, making for the bell as she spoke.

"Pray sit down a little and compose yourself," observed the Duchess, drawing a chair towards her—"you are agitated."

"I shall be better as soon as I get into the

open air, thank you," observed Mrs. Flather, in a tone of the deepest despondency.

The Duchess tried to get her to talk on various subjects, from the weather down to the Portfolio ; but Mrs. Flather was dead beat ; " yes and no " were all she could say ; and sometimes she said one when she ought to have said the other.

The footman's " Your carriage is at the door, if you please, marm," sounded a welcome release ; and the Duchess, by no means sorry to get rid of her pertinacious visitor, offered her arm to accompany her to the door.

From the loop-hole window of his dressing-room above, Jeems saw his " ma-in-law " ascend the lofty steps of the antiquated landaulet and drive away amid the adieus of the Duchess.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“ He wot prigs what isn’t hisn,
If he’s kitched, ’ill go to prison.”

NEWGATE LYRICS.

AWAY from the scenes where our mistakes arise,
away from the friends who prompt their course,
how soon the mind sees its errors, and points to
the path we should not have deserted !

Ere Mrs. Flather’s rattletrap jingled under
the castellated gateway of Donkeyton-Castle
Park, she saw how Emma and she had mutually
assisted in deceiving each other, how their
wishes had been father to their thoughts.

Before she got two miles on her road, she
wondered that she could have been so silly as to
go. It wasn’t likely the Marquis should have
seriously thought of Emma ; still more improbable
that the Duke and Duchess would sanction, much
less wish for such a match. Most likely there
were places in London where great people met,

and though Emma's and her knowledge of high life was confined to the Donkeytons, she began to suspect that great people were more numerous than they imagined. They might not be so great as the Donkeytons, perhaps, but still great enough to prevent the Marquis from being so desperately put to as to have to seek the country for a wife.

Mrs. Flather was greatly distressed—distressed that she should have made such a fool of herself, and vexed that she had not checked instead of encouraging Emma. Then there was Mr. Jorrocks, and his odious matter-of-fact questions, and Mrs. Trotter's still more odious curiosity. Altogether, Mrs. Flather was in a bad way. The Duchess was sure to tell; she would tell the Marquis, the Marquis would tell Mr. Jorrocks, Mr. Jorrocks would tell Mrs. Jorrocks, and Mrs. Jorrocks would tell all the world. Horrible idea!

Then Mrs. Flather thought how she should meet Emma. What little consolation she might expect from her, and again she deplored having encouraged instead of checking her folly.

It so happened on this eventful day, that there had been a very small attendance of the Justices of our sovereign lady the Queen, at Sellborough

petty sessions, Mr. Green and Mr. Jorrocks being the only ones present; Captain Bluster had got the lumbago, Mr. Smith had gone to look at a horse, and Mr. somebody else to look at a cow, and a third gentleman's wife was ill.

Mr. Green having popped into court a few minutes before our worthy friend, had got possession of the chair, and was sitting in state when Mr. Jorrocks arrived. The clerk too was away, and his place was supplied by a subordinate. A case had just been called on under the vagrant act, disposable of by one magistrate. It was a charge by farmer Goosecap, against some of the independent, itinerant tribe—Hannah Hardy, Jane Hardy, William Hardy, and Alfred Hardy, very swarthy ringletty people, of trying to make free with his poultry; and Goosecap having had that compliment paid him before, wanted the full measure of vengeance—*nunc pro tunc*, as Captain Bluster would say.

It seems the ladies had held Goosecap in fortune-telling talk, while the men inspected the poultry yard; but, in trying to catch old chanticleer, he made such a noise as disturbed the servants, who gave the alarm; and, wonderful to relate, they took the whole troop.

Goosecap had got to about the middle of his story, when Mr. Jorrocks entered, but seeing the people, and hearing the latter part of it, Mr. Jorrocks had no difficulty in comprehending the case, and entering fully into it.

"They'd have a jackass I reckon?" observed our Squire interrogatively, as the complainant finished.

"Yes, sir, they had," replied Goosecap, "tethered in the lane, about a quarter of a mile off."

"I thought so!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, grinding his teeth, and looking as if he would eat the whole troop. "I thought so," repeated he. "Every man," continued he most sententiously, "wot keeps a jackass is a waggabone; every man wot keeps a jackass keeps a pair of big panniers also, and there's no sayin' wot on *airth* goes into them. I'd convict them all as rogues and waggabones," added he, turning to Mr. Green, "and give them full measure—three months to the 'ouse of C., 'ard labour, and all that sort o' thing."

Mr. Green was an indiscriminate humanity-monger, a man who made as much to do about committing a hardened vagabond as others would with a reclaimable first offender, and always tried how little justice he could do and how great

a show of feeling he could make. Many men do the same. It is a cheap way of gaining credit for kindheartedness.

Finding Mr. Jorrocks was in the trouncing mood—not always the case with the old gentleman either, particularly when the offenders happened to be females, Mr. Green waxed uncommonly merciful, and, in reply to Mr. Jorrocks's hint, observed that he couldn't do it under the act. Thereupon, a long wrangle ensued between our worthy friend and his colleague, as to the difference between idle and disorderly persons, and rogues and vagabonds, but which we will let Mr. Jorrocks explain when he tells his story to Mrs. Flather, which we will now accompany him to do.

The business of the day being over, Mr. Jorrocks bethought him, as he repaired to the inn for his machine, to ask where the job carriage was gone to, and, finding that it was bound to Donkeyton Castle, as Benjamin said, Mr. Jorrocks drove very quietly in that direction, and soon ascertained at the first turnpike gate that the well-known vehicle had gone through, and not having returned, our friend kept moving leisurely on, commenting on the husbandry of

the district, and the stupidity of Mr. Green in not knowing the difference between an idle and disorderly person, and a rogue and vagabond.

At length he espied the old posters, bobbing their heads up and down at a sort of walking trot, while the driver's right arm went out at regular intervals, laying the pig-jobber whiplong straight along the carcass of the offside one.

"'Ere she comes," said Mr. Jorrocks to himself, as the old vehicle neared him. "I'll give her an agreeable surprise." So saying, our friend drew up under a now leaf-shedding sycamore, and quietly waited her coming. Could he but have seen into Mrs. Flather's mind, he would have spared her the infliction; but Mr. Jorrocks having no cares himself—at least none superior to the interests of his bull, it never entered his head that other people could have any, certainly not ladies, who, he thought, were only meant for amusement.

"YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE!" roared our worthy friend, rising in his vehicle as Mrs. Flather, in a state of utter dejection, came jingling past where he sat.

"Scream! help! scream!" went Mrs. Flather, to the convulsions of the coachman and Benja-

min, and the great amusement of Mr. Jor-rocks.

"Oh, Mr. Jorrocks! how could you?" exclaimed Mrs. Flather, angrily. "You don't know how you've frightened me."

"Nonsense, my leetle dack, nonsense!" said Mr. Jorrocks, soothingly. "*It's only me!*"

"But you don't know *how* you frightened me, Mr. Jorrocks," sobbed Mrs. Flather, diving into her reticule for her pocket handkerchief.

"Nonsense, my darlin'!" continued Mr. Jorrocks, "nonsense, it's only fan."

Mrs. Flather sobbed violently, glad to get a vent for her tears. Mr. Jorrocks looked foolish at the result of his practical joke.

"*You* take the reins," said Mr. Jorrocks to Benjamin, "and drive quietly on arter the chay, and I'll ride 'ome with Mrs. Flather," continued he, getting out of his own vehicle, and opening the door of Mrs. Flather's.

"Shall I help you, sir?" asked the coachman, looking down from his box at Mr. Jorrocks's movements.

"You don't take me for a cripple, do you?" replied our friend, snappishly, "that I can't get in by myself?"

Thereupon, Mr. Jorrocks let down the long flight of steps, resembling Robinson Crusoe's ladder, and prepared to ascend.

Up he got.

The thing then was to get the steps back again, and this rather puzzled Mr. Jorrocks; his short fat arms could not reach low enough to get a sufficient purchase to pull them up in a heap, so as to fold them like a map, or a joiner's foot-rule, and it was no use attempting them at the top. Head downwards, he tried in vain, each effort drawing ill-suppressed bursts of laughter from the coachman and Benjamin, as the Jorrocksian jacket's fan-tail flew up, and the Squire seemed likely to land head foremost on the ground.

It was no go.

"Vy don't you come and shet Mrs. Flather's chay door for her, Binjimin?" at last exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, starting up, and throwing the fan-tail back, as Benjamin snickered right out. "The devil's in these servants," muttered Mr. Jorrocks, seating himself by Mrs. Flather; "they seem to think they're kept to do nothin' at all. I'll skin you alive," muttered Mr. Jorrocks with a shake of the head, as Benjamin refolded the

rattling, ill-jointed, iron steps. "Now," said Mr. Jorrocks to the coachman, as the door banged too, "drive quietly 'ome; don't 'urry, for my quad is a followin', and is rayther tired."

There was little need for this humane injunction, for coachee had no idea of hurrying—indeed his cattle were incapable of it, and having jerked and flopped them into motion, on they went at the

" We're a' nodding,
Nid, nid, nodding"

sort of pace that they had hove in sight at.

" Well, my leetle dack," said Mr. Jorrocks in an under tone, scrudging up to Mrs. Flather and squeezing her hand; " well, my leetle dack," said he, " you've recovered your fright I 'opes."

" Indeed I *haven't*," replied Mrs. Flather snappishly; " you've almost thrown me into hysterics—made me shockingly nervous."

" That's a great pity," observed Mr. Jorrocks, " werry great pity; I only meant it for fan."

" I don't like such horse fun," said Mrs. Flather, anything but pleased at our friend's intrusion into her carriage.

" *Only me*," said Mr. Jorrocks soothingly.

Mrs. Flather pouted her lip and was silent.

* * * * *

“And when’s Emma to be a marchioness?” at length asked Mr. Jorrocks, thinking to say something to please Mrs. Flather.

“Don’t talk nonsense,” replied Mrs. Flather.

“Nonsense!” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks; “I ’opes there’s no nonsense in the matter; real, good, substantial, down-right matter o’-fact-ism I should ’ope. You’ve been to the castle, ’aven’t you?” asked Mr. Jorrocks.

“Never you mind, Mr. Curiosity,” replied Mrs. Flather, colouring at the question. “And pray where have you been?” asked she, anxious to turn the conversation.

“O, why you know, I told you i’ the mornin’ I was goin’ a beakin’. It’s our beak day, you know,” added the Justice.

“And had you much business?” inquired Mrs. Flather, anxious for any subject rather than the castle one.

“Not much,” replied Mr. Jorrocks, “not much; this alteration in the New Poor Law, I expect, will make more. We had a case too that puzzled Mr. Green, and do all I could I couldn’t set him right.”

"What was that?" inquired Mrs. Flather, glad to lead our friend on to what, at any other time, would have been a dreaded subject.

"Why it was this," replied Mr. Jorrocks, taking off his hat and placing it between his legs, "it was a case under the fifth o' George the Fourth, chapter eighty-two, commonly called the wagrant hact, being a hact for the punishment of idle and disorderly persons, and rogues and waggabones. Now this fifth o' George the Fourth, chapter eighty-two, in my opinion, is the finest piece o' legislation extant; beats old Magna Charta, new charter, and all other charters, into fits. In fact, there's nothin' like the fifth o' George the Fourth for keeping things straight."

"Indeed," observed Mrs. Flather, who had never heard of its efficacy before.

"Well, then, you see," said Mr. Jorrocks, "this fifth o' George the Fourth diwides offenders into three classes, jest as railway directors diwide their passengers. First," said Mr. Jorrocks, pressing the forefinger of his right hand against the thumb on his left, "is the great cock offender, called 'INCORRIGIBLE ROGUE,' a chap wot's too bad for anything: he has passed through

the other two coaches and got to a first-class carriage. Next to him," continued Mr. Jorrocks, putting his forefingers together, "is the 'rogue and waggabone;' and lastly comes the idle and disorderly person. You twig?" asked he, looking at Mrs. Flather.

"Perfectly," replied she, thinking what a wiggling she would get from Emma.

"Well then, you see," said Mr. Jorrocks, "this fifth o' George the Fourth—a hact wot may be jestly called the true palladium of our rights—describes what shall constitute the three classes of offenders. Idle and disorderly persons are not those wot leave their keys, work-bags, and pocket-handkerches about, but beggars and people wot wont work—people wanderin' abroad, or placin' themselves in any public place, street, 'ighway, court, or passage, to beg or gather halms; and these it is lawful for a jestice to commit on his own view, as it is called, to the 'ouse of C., which means correction, there to be kept to 'ard labour for any time not exceedin' one calendar month. You understand all that?" asked Mr. Jorrocks, looking in Mrs. Flather's face, who had fallen into a reverie.

"Perfectly," replied the lady.

“Then,” continued Mr. Jorrocks, “comes rogues and waggabones ; this is where Green got wrong to-day. The clause describin’ rogues and waggabones sets out by referrin’ to the precedin’ one about the idle and disorderly persons, it being the intention o’ the statut’ makers that no person should be idle and disorderly twice.”

“Indeed !” exclaimed Mrs. Flather, thinking that would be a grand secret to possess.

“No,” said Mr. Jorrocks, very gravely, “the rogue and waggabone clause commences by enactin’ that every person committin’ any of the idle and disorderly offences a second time after having been convicted in course afore, instead of being any longer considered idle and disorderly, shall thenceforth become rogues and waggabones. Then it goes on to enact that certain offences committed the first time shall make the offenders rogues and waggabones. Every person, for instance, pretendin’ or professin’ to tell fortin’s, or usin’ any subtle craft, means, or dewice, by palmistry, which means examinin’ the marks i’ the palm o’ your ’and, jest as the dark-eyed ladies do at Hepsom or Hascot races—whiles, indeed, with the Surrey ’unt—well, usin’ any subtle craft, means, or dewice, by palmistry or otherwise, to

deceive or impose on any of her Majesty's subjects ; every person wanderin' abroad and lodgin' in any barn or out'ouse, or in any deserted or unoccupied buildin' or in the open hair, or under a tent, or in any cart or waggon, not havin' any wisible means o' subsistence, and not givin' a good account of himself or herself, and every person bein' found—and this," continued Mr. Jorrocks, pressing Mrs. Flather's arm, " is the point on which Green and I differ'd—and every person bein' found in or upon any dwellin'-'ouse, ware-'ouse, coach-'ouse, stable, or out'ouse, or in any inclosed yard, garden, or harea, for any unlawful purpose, and many other sitivations," continued Mr. Jorrocks with a waive of his hand, " shall be deemed rogues and waggabones, within the true intent and meanin' of the hact: and it shall be lawful for any jesticie o' the peace to commit such 'fender (bein' thereof convicted before him by the confession of such 'fender, or by the evidence on oath of one or more credible witness or witnesses) to the 'ouse of C., there to be kept to 'ard labour for any time not exceedin' three calendar months."

" Indeed ! " observed Mrs. Flather, as Mr. Jorrocks paused for breath.

“Quite true, I assure you,” continued the Squire. “Us beaks have great powers. But you will perceive that we have less power over rogues and waggabones than we have over idle and disorderly persons. Idle and disorderlies we can “quod” on our own view, but rogues and waggabones we must have witnesses against. Well, but howsomever that isn’t the p’int. Green and I differed about the offence. Four sturdy wagrants, two men and two women, were brought up at petty sessions—the women, charged with palmistry—bamming farmer Goosecap about a gold mine under the hill at the back of his ’ouse, while the men tried to rob his ’en roost. Well, the case was as clear as crystal, and I said to Green in a visper, for he was chief jestice to-day, owin’ to my bein’ a few minutes late, I said in a visper, the jestice o’ the case I think will be satisfied by giving the ladies a month, and the gentlemen two months in the ’ouse of C.; for palmistry, you see,” continued Mr. Jorrocks, crossing one leg over the other, “albeit, improper, p’raps, is more absurd than mischievous—nothin’ at least compared to robbin’ the ’en roost; besides, the palmists were ladies—one rayther good lookin’—and the men were stiff,

sturdy, bull-dog lookin' 'ounds, that would be better for *three* months, if not for total imprisonment. But wot do you think Green said?" asked Mr. Jorrocks, leaning forward and looking full in Mrs. Flather's face.

"Can't tell, I'm sure," replied Mrs. Flather, wearied with Mr. Jorrocks's prattle.

"Why, Green got the fifth o' George the Fourth in his 'and, and readin' the rogue and waggabone clause, insisted that no person could be convicted as a rogue and waggabone wot had not been previously convicted as idle and disorderly!"

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Flather.

"Quite true, I assure you," continued Mr. Jorrocks, warming at the recollection of it, "and not all I could say could convince him that the opening part of section four—'And be it further enacted, that every person committin' any of the 'fences hereinbefore mentioned, after havin' been convicted as an idle and disorderly person,' referred to the previous section, prohibitin' people being considered idle and disorderly a second time, and makin' them rogues and waggabones instead. Green insisted that no person could be convicted as a rogue and waggabone wot had not

been previously convicted as idle and disorderly ; so to give these parties a step towards the second class carriage he convicted them as idle and disorderly, givin' the ladies a week and the gentlemen a fortnight a piece on the mill."

Our Cockney Squire having exhausted his talk, bethought him what he wanted to say to Mrs. Flather. He couldn't hit upon it at first.

"The Markis, to be sure," at last exclaimed he aloud to himself, causing Mrs. Flather to shudder. She would rather have heard him recite the statutes at large, and comment upon them as he went, than return to the subject of her misfortune.

"You thought yourself werry sly, I dare say," observed Mr. Jorrocks, putting on his hat and laying hold of her elbow, "stealin' a march to the Castle. Could'nt gammon me though, I guess—am bad to 'umbug. Howsomever, never mind—tell us about the Duke—was he glad to see you? Monstrous glad to see you? Queer chap that Duke—*monstrous* queer chap as he would say—*mad* I should say—mad. 'Ow's his farm? Did you see his roan ball, Tiberius? Noble quadruped I understand."

"But 'ere's the Marchioness!" exclaimed Mr.

Jorrocks, as the chaise suddenly stopped, on encountering *la dame blanche* on the top of a piece of rising ground, up which the horses had thought necessary to walk.

There was Emma sure enough, in white, with blue ribbons in her straw bonnet, and a blue silk scarf drooping from her shoulders, her clear complexion partaking of a slightly roseate hue, and her eyes brightened up with the animation of anxiety. Seeing Mr. Jorrocks with her mamma, the first brush looked upon his presence as an omen of success, particularly as there was a broad grin on his good-natured countenance, as he took off his hat and addressed her as her ladyship. “ ’Ow does your Ladyship do? ” asked Mr. Jorrocks, as Emma stood transfixed by the carriage.

She did not know what to make of it. Her mamma looked smilingly serious—it might be the affectation of humility after conquest, but Mr. Jorrocks was grinningly smiling. He seemed to partake of the triumph.

A landaulet, a post-chariot, with three, is a very inconvenient carriage for diplomacy. People must turn their heads to communicate even by looks, and a third person hears and sees all that passes. Moreover, Mr. Jorrocks insisted upon

riding bodkin—a very awkward sized bodkin he was—especially as he would have all three to sit back, so that the conversation might be general.

“ Well, you’ll be a gettin’ your coronet ready I s’pose,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, turning to Emma and shutting out the view of her mamma, whose vacant countenance she was trying to study by a sidelong sort of glance. Emma smiled.

“ *Don’t talk nonsense, Mr. Jorrocks!*” exclaimed Mrs. Flather snappishly.

“ Well, but don’t get your ’ead turned,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, squeezing Emma’s ungloved hand. “ Don’t cut your old frinds,” continued he; “ and wotever you do, send me a good slice o’ cake.”

Emma smiled. Women always smile at the mention of bride-cake.

“ The custom o’ sending cards and compliments may be werry conwenient when there is’nt much tin,” observed he; “ but you’ll ’ave no ’casion for sich close shavin’, so tell them to hice it well, and let the halmond paste be a hinch thick at least. Never mind about Cupids or cherrybins, or none o’ them gentry; *for me*, at least,” added he.

With this pleasant sort of *badinage*, pleasant to

Emma, but excruciatingly painful to Mrs. Flather, Mr. Jorrocks rattled and talked on till the driver looked down from his perch as he arrived at the turn of the road leading up to Mrs. Flather's, and asked if Mr. Jorrocks would go to the Manse or get out there, very handsomely offering to drive him down to the Hall if he preferred doing so.

Looking at his watch and finding it wanted but ten minutes to dinner-time, Mr. Jorrocks decided upon vacating his bodkinship and driving home in his own vehicle.

Taking an affectionate leave of the Marchioness and her mamma, and charging them above all things "not to let their heads be turned," Mr. Jorrocks opened the door, and unfolding the long string of steps (like a tailor's pattern-book), descended from the altitude of the old landaulet. Having boxed mother and daughter up again, he sought the culinary comforts of his own house in the humble lowness of his own machine.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ Still harping on my daughter.”

“ And how is it to be?” asked Emma eagerly, as Mr. Jorrock’s low-crowned hat disappeared past the landaulet.

“ Oh, don’t be silly, Emma,” replied Mrs. Flather, snappishly, thinking she had better take the high hand, and see if that would prevent Emma attempting it.

“ Nay, my own dear mamma,” said Emma, coaxingly, “ you surely won’t be angry with your own Emma on such an important day.”

“ Important day, forsooth !” muttered Mrs. Flather ; “ *I’ve* no desire for such importance.”

“ Nay, mamma, wouldn’t you like to see your daughter a duchess ?”

“ Duchess, indeed,” retorted Mrs. Flather, “ you are counting your chickens before they are hatched, I think.”

“Well, *marchioness*, if you would like that any better,” replied Emma; “for my part, I really think *marchioness* sounds not only as well as *duchess*, but is longer and more imposing.”

“I wish you would get such nonsense out of your head, child,” snapped Mrs. Flather, looking very downcast.

“Nay!” exclaimed Emma, alarmed at her countenance, “you don’t mean to say it’s not to be? Speak—tell me,” cried she, looking deadly pale. The carriage then stopped at the door. Emma descended the jingling steps with the feelings of a malefactor going to execution. She hurried into the house, hardly knowing what she was about.

Her mother tardily followed.

“You don’t mean to say,” exclaimed she, as her revered parent entered, “that you’ve made a mess of the thing?—offended the Duke or the Duchess—put them against it any way?”

“Do *not* worry me, Emma,” replied Mrs. Flather, calmly but sternly.

“Nay, then!” rejoined Emma, “I see what you’ve done! I was sure you would!” exclaimed she, clasping her hands, and, with up-turned eyes, bursting into tears.

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"You *would* go," sobbed Emma.

"I couldn't help it, my dear," replied Mrs. Flather.

"*Don't tell me !*" screamed Emma, at the top of her voice, her choler rising as her mamma softened. "*I told you* you would make a mess of it—your common-place-matter-of-fact-way of going to work, just as if you were bargaining for butter. *You would go !*" screamed she again, at the top of her voice, throwing herself into an easy chair.

A copious flood of tears deprived her for a time of further utterance.

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"And I dare say you've irretrievably ruined it," sobbed Emma, looking out of her pocket handkerchief.

Mrs. Flather was silent.

"*I was sure you had !*" screamed Emma, jumping up, and stamping violently on the floor with both feet. "O, what a thing it is to be led by a person without feeling or discretion !"

Another shower of tears followed this filial observation.

"Oh dear ! oh dear ! that I should ever have

let you go by yourself—I might have been sure what would happen.”

Mrs. Flather looked foolish, not knowing whether to vindicate her conduct, or let her daughter have her “fling.” At length she spoke.

“My dear child,” said she, “you do me great injustice.”

“Don’t injustice me!” screamed Emma; “it’s you that’s done *me* injustice. Why can’t you let me manage my own affairs my own way?”

“I did it all for the best,” observed Mrs. Flather, calmly.

“I know nothing about best—you could’nt have done it worse if you’d tried. I’ll be bound to say, you’ve disgusted the Duke, and the Duchess, and the”——here Emma again burst into an overpowering flood of tears. This continued for some time, during which she tried to command her temper, and summon resolution to bear the sad *dénouement*.

“Come, tell me all about it,” said she at length, folding her wet handkerchief in a heap, and fixing her red eyes on her disconcerted mamma.

“Well, my dear, I’ve nothing more to tell,” said Mrs. Flather, vacantly.

“Nothing more to tell!” exclaimed Emma, “why you’ve told me nothing—you left me to conjecture all.”

“And very well you’ve guessed it,” thought Mrs. Flather; but this she kept to herself, fearing a missile at her head might be the reward of her temerity.

“Well, my dear,” commenced Mrs. Flather again, “I just went as we arranged, you know.”

“Well, and who did you see first?” interrupted Emma.

“O, the Duchess,” replied Mrs. Flather; “you know I couldn’t ask for the Duke.”

“Well, and what said the Duchess? How did you begin?—tell me *all* quickly, or I shall die of suspense.”

“The Duchess was very polite—extremely polite.”

“O, that’s all understood—all matter of course—great people are always polite,” sobbed Emma. “And how did you begin?” asked she; “did you blurt out at once what you’d come for, or felt your way?”

“*Of course not*,” replied Mrs. Flather; “I talked about indifferent things, and got gradually on till

we talked about James, and then I broached the subject as delicately as possible."

"And what said the Duchess?" asked Emma. "How did she take it?"

"Why she was very civil—extremely civil; but she evidently didn't wish for it, at least she wasn't anxious about it."

"Odious woman! I always thought she would be the difficulty," observed Emma. "The Duke's worth fifty of her."

"Thought James was too young to settle," continued Mrs. Flather; "didn't know his own mind perhaps. Still, if the Duke wished it, she had no objection."

"And did you see the Duke?" asked Emma eagerly, still hoping there was a chance.

"I did," replied Mrs. Flather firmly.

"Well, go on!" said Emma eagerly.

"*And he wouldn't hear of it.*"

"*The old beast!*" exclaimed Emma. "What reason did he give?"

"None, I think," replied Mrs. Flather; "he got into such a passion that I was glad to escape to the Duchess again."

"*Odious old infidel!*" ejaculated Emma, bursting into a fresh flood of tears. "And is there

no hope?" sobbed she, again looking out of her wet handkerchief, like the sun from the watery clouds. "Did you see James?"

"No," replied Mrs. Flather, "he never appeared."

"He wouldn't use me so," sobbed Emma, thinking of the kiss and squeezing he gave her.

"The Duke will never hear of it, I'm sure," observed Mrs. Flather. "You don't know what a passion he was in."

"Horrid old man!" replied Emma; "looks like an old savage."

Mother and daughter sat silent for some time.

"It's one consolation to think the people down street won't get him, at all events," at length observed Mrs. Flather, still pondering on her misfortunes.

"I don't believe he ever thought of *her*," pouted Emma.

"The Duke will never hear of a commoner, I'm sure," said Mrs. Flather.

"It's hard upon James, that he mayn't marry who he pleases," observed Emma.

"It is," assented Mrs. Flather.

"Hasn't the privilege of the poorest peasant on his estate," observed Emma.

"However, the offer's always something," rejoined Mrs. Flather.

Emma was silent.

"I suppose there's no doubt he did offer?" observed Mrs. Flather inquiringly.

"Oh, none," replied Emma.

"Do you remember the exact words he made use of?" asked mamma.

"Why no, I can't charge my memory with the precise words; indeed, you know, these matters are managed as much by looks as words."

"Well, but you have no doubt in your own mind that what he did say related to marriage, and amounted to an offer, have you?" asked Mrs. Flather.

"None whatever," replied Emma, confidently.

"You couldn't well be mistaken in that matter, I think," rejoined her mother, "seeing you have had so many and such eligible offers before."

"Certainly not," pouted Emma, determined to stick up for her offer.

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"The best thing you can do, I think," ob-

served Mrs. Flather after a pause, "is to write to the Marquis himself."

"Why so?" asked Emma, thinking the Marquis might deny the soft impeachment.

"Because," replied Mrs. Flather, "in the first place, the affair is his, and not his father's or mother's."

"Very true," said Emma.

"And, in the second place, we have had no communication with him on the subject. It will only be right to give him the option of fulfilling his promise in spite of his father and mother."

"I should doubt his doing that," observed Emma, not feeling inclined to press the tender point too closely. "His father might disinherit him, and that would be awkward for us both. We couldn't live upon air."

"O, no; these great people can't disinherit," replied Mrs. Flather. "Their affairs are tied up tightly before they are born."

"But still I shouldn't like to appear too eager," observed Emma coyly.

"Well that's very noble of you, my dear," said Mrs. Flather, looking approvingly at her daughter; "but still it would only be fair towards the Marquis."

Emma was silent, thinking how it might act.

“He might think himself badly used,” observed Mrs. Flather after a pause, “if he was not allowed the opportunity.”

Emma was still silent.

“Besides,” continued Mrs. Flather, “you must remember you have nothing to show for your offer. People—and there are plenty of ill-natured people ready to do so—will dispute it; whereas, if you have your letter and his answer to show, there is proof positive.”

“Don’t you think the best plan will be,” asked Emma, “as the Duke and Duchess are both so disagreeable, for me to write to James and release him; and then I could show the letter doing it.”

“A very good idea indeed, I think, my dear,” replied Mrs. Flather smilingly.

“I could write it so as not to require any answer,” observed Emma.

“What putting an end to the thing altogether?” asked Mrs. Flather.

“Yes,” replied Emma.

“I don’t know that that would be the best course,” observed Mrs. Flather, after a pause; “it would rather, I think, partake of the objection I urged against not applying to him at all. He

should be allowed the option, I think, of declaring his adhesion to his promise. You should not blame him for the acts of his father and mother."

"True," replied Emma; "but did he appear to have talked to them about it?"

"Why no, I should say not," confessed Mrs. Flather unwillingly.

"That's the awkward part of it," thought Emma. "Then they would be surprised when you broached the subject, I suppose?" asked she.

"They were," replied Mrs. Flather, "the Duke particularly; he was the worst of the two by far."

"Nasty old man," ejaculated Emma.

"Not but that the Duchess was quite as determined," observed Mrs. Flather; "but she was'nt so rude," added she.

"Then you think there is no hope from them; no chance of their softening?" inquired Emma.

"None whatever," replied Mrs. Flather; "the Duke seemed perfectly frantic at the idea."

Emma then again thought of the letter. "You know I could write such a letter," observed she, "as he could answer or not as he liked."

"Well, my dear," replied Mrs. Flather, "you are a better scribe than me. The sooner it is

done you know, the greater will be the appearance of independence on your part."

Emma sighed as she thought of the loss of all her greatness. She then got up to look for her portfolio. Of course, it was in one place—her paper in another—her pens in a third—and the ink in the *other* room. Having got them all scraped together, and having selected a pen that would write from the many that would not, she squared her paper before her, and prepared for a start.

"What shall I call him, mamma?" asked Emma, as she looked at the nib of her pen.

"What you generally call him, my dear, I should think," replied Mrs. Flather.

"Oh! why, you know when I'm speaking to him, I call him my Lord; when *of* him, I call him Jeems, as the Duke does."

"Of course, then, you'll call him my Lord."

"But must it be my Lord or my dear Lord?" asked Emma.

"My dear Lord, of course," replied Mrs. Flather, "you've had no quarrel with *him*, you know."

"Or, dear Lord Bray, which do you think would sound best?"

"My dear Lord Bray, perhaps," said Mrs. Flather.

"I think it *would*," replied Emma, writing it at the beginning place of her sheet—half way down of course—"My dear Lord Bray."

"But you are not writing to send, surely!" exclaimed Mrs. Flather.

"No, only the copy," replied Emma; "but I like to see how it looks, as well as how it reads."

"My dear Lord Bray," she read again, and then looked about for a thought. "What shall I say next? it must be something high-flown. 'My dear Lord.' I don't know but I like 'my dear Lord' best," observed Emma: "it looks better to begin rather stiffly—you know I can finish off differently—or postscript a little. I think I'll begin, 'My dear Lord,'" added she, striking her pen through 'Bray.'

"My dear Lord," she read again.

"So long as I conceived your attentions were sanctioned by"—wrote Emma.

"Shall I say 'attentions,' or 'visits?'" asked she. "So long as I conceived your visits were sanctioned by your parents."

"I think I'll put 'visits,'" continued Emma,

answering herself, striking out ‘attentions,’ and substituting ‘visits.’ She then wrote on—“I freely confess I was proud to receive your attentions.” “Does that sound bold, do you think, mamma?” asked she, reading it over :

“So long as I conceived your visits were sanctioned by your parents, I freely confess I was proud to receive your attentions.”

“No, I think not, my dear,” replied Mrs. Flather; “perhaps you might put—‘sanctioned by the Duke and Duchess of Donkeyton,’ instead of ‘parents,’” suggested Mrs. Flather.

“No, I think ‘parents’ better,” observed Emma, after a moment’s consideration.

“Well, my dear, you know best. It depends altogether upon the terms you have been on together.”

“But,” wrote Emma. “Now I want to say,” said she, looking at her mother, “that I can’t have anything to say to him without their approbation: of course it must be put in better language than that.”

She then read over again—“My dear Lord—so long as I conceived your visits were sanctioned by your parents, I freely confess I was proud to receive your attentions. But,” she wrote on,

“no power on earth—no rank—no title—could induce me to receive them clandestinely.”

“What do you think of that?” asked she, looking up at her mamma.

“Very good indeed, I think, my dear,” replied her approving parent. “Perhaps, instead of ‘clandestinely’ you might put, ‘without their consent.’”

“Do you think so?” asked Emma, twirling her pen, thinking her own a better sounding word.

“It would look more regular,” observed Mrs. Flather—“more as if they had *all* known about it, at all events.”

“Perhaps it would,” assented Emma, striking out the word “clandestinely,” and substituting “without their consent” for it.

“Now, I think we had better not let out that you had gone to-day for the purpose of putting the question point blank,” observed Emma, after a pause—“make it appear rather as if their objection had come out accidentally; or, as if it was more a hint than a downright refusal.”

“That would hardly do, I’m afraid,” observed Mrs. Flather, “for they neither of them minced the matter.”

“ Well, but the letter is more to *show* to others, than to enlighten them,” sighed Emma.

“ It is so,” sighed Mrs. Flather in return. “ You might speak about the difference in rank,” she added, after a pause: “ lay their objection upon that.”

“ Just so,” said Emma, thinking how she could embody the sentiment. She then read the sentence over again, and thus proceeded: “ I could not be insensible to the objections difference of station might create, though, perhaps, I had reason to believe that they would be overlooked in my case; finding, however, from my dearest mamma’s interview with the Duke and Duchess this morning that such is not likely to be so, I lose not a moment in declaring that I will never enter any family without the full approbation, nay, encouragement of its members.”

“ What do you think of that?” asked Emma, looking up as she got to the end of the long sentence.

“ Very good indeed, my dear, I think,” replied Mrs. Flather. “ You might say it was as much my determination as your own,” observed Mrs. Flather.

Emma thought she wouldn’t—she would take

all the credit to herself. "This being the case," she continued, "you will not be surprised at receiving this hurried communication, relinquishing as I now do all——what shall I call it?" asked Emma, looking up, with tears in her eyes.

"All claim, perhaps," said Mrs. Flather.

"Or pretension," suggested Emma, feeling that was more like the thing. "Relinquishing, as I now do, all claim and pretension to your hand," wrote she.

Emma then took a cry.

"I cannot conclude without wishing your Lordship, in all sincerity," she continued—"I want to wish him what Mr. Jorrocks calls better luck next time," sobbed Emma, folding and refolding her pocket handkerchief. "I cannot conclude without wishing your Lordship, in all sincerity, a more exalted and more fortunate choice. Your merits, your wealth, and your connexions, forbid any doubt on this subject, though I am certain you will never meet with any one more sincerely, devotedly attached than your

"EMMA."

She then went off in another cry.

Tea then came in, and the love-sick damsel eat

half a loaf of bread, with a pot of strawberry jam, and butter to match. The letter was then copied with the best pen, on the best wire-wove paper, sealed and directed most becomingly, and given to the boy to take to the post the first thing in the morning.

We need hardly add that Emma had a nervous headache next day, and did not show.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ I tell it you in *strict* confidence.”

MRS. Jorrocks could not make out from Mr. Jorrocks's story whether Emma had accomplished the Marquis or not. Mr. Jorrocks himself was inclined to think she had ; but Mrs. Trotter, who had dropped in to hear all she could, and Mrs. Jorrocks, thought otherwise in consultation. They agreed that Mrs. Flather would not have been able to contain herself if she had—certainly not over that morning. At the same time, the undoubted journey to Donkeyton, and the seeing by the Duchess herself of Mrs. Flather back to her carriage (duly reported by the driver), puzzled the consulters not a little. Such a thing had never been heard of before as any one going to Donkeyton Castle without a regular invitation.

Mrs. Trotter was in a desperate state of agita-

tion. If Emma had captured the Marquis, it only showed what Eliza might have done if she had had a fair chance. "Certainly," she observed, with upturned nose, "if *all* people were as regardless of decency as Mrs. Flather, they might all get marquises for their daughters," thinking of the night his lordship had spent at the manse after the harvest home ball.

Mrs. Claudius Sacker, the doctor's wife, dropped in too, the flying rumours having rendered her uneasy at home. She had not been able to "settle" since she heard of the letter to the marquis. This was news to the others, and the discussion was resumed with great vigour. Doctors and their wives generally try to keep in with all parties, indeed they would be great fools if they did not, and Mrs. Sacker had called to consult Mrs. Jorrocks whether she ought to go up to the manse to tender her earliest congratulations to the marchioness elect and her mamma.

Mrs. Jorrocks "didn't know;" Mr. Jorrocks and Mrs. Trotter thought she better had, and our gallant squire offered to accompany her. Just, however, as his worship was starting, the constable brought a troop of vagrants for him to

administer some of his "Daffy's Elixir" to, in the shape of the fifth of George the Fourth.

Mrs. Sacker was just the person Mrs. Flather would have selected for the propagation of her story, for, independently of the delicate situation she filled, Mrs. Sacker had a wonderful capacity for believing all she heard. There was no story too wild, no tale too improbable for her to repeat—not only repeat, but almost to vouch for.

Mrs. Flather received her with more than usual pleasure, and in reply to her inquiries after Emma, pleaded the ladies' usual pocket complaint—a sick headache. The two then sat commonplacing it for some time, each wishing the other would lead to the point. At last Mrs. Flather hemmed and spoke. "I suppose you've heard about Emma and the Marquis of Bray," observed she, eyeing Mrs. Sacker.

"Why, yes—no—certainly, I've heard *something*," replied Mrs. Sacker.

"And what have you heard?" inquired Mrs. Flather.

"Why, that I have to congratulate you on his becoming your son-in-law," replied Mrs. Sacker, "which I have very great pleasure in doing,"

added she, tendering both hands to Mrs. Flather for a hug.

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Sacker," replied she, shaking them. "I'm sure we have your best wishes at all times—Mr. Sacker's too. At present, however, you are—are—are——"

"A little premature, perhaps," suggested Mrs. Sacker.

"Not altogether *that*," replied Mrs. Flather, "but a little—a little—misinformed rather."

"How so?" inquired Mrs. Sacker.

"Why, the truth is, that the Marquis is an extremely fine young man—a very well-principled, genteel young man, and one that I'm sure any mother might safely entrust a daughter with, but he's young, and—and—and—you understand."

"Perfectly," replied Mrs. Sacker, who did nothing of the sort.

"The Duke wishes him to travel—go to Switzerland—see Venice—Florence—thinks he might pick up a princess perhaps."

"But I'm sure an English wife would be much better for him," observed Mrs. Sacker, who was a capital judge of what was good for other people.

"Well, I think so too," replied Mrs. Flather; "but of course that is for the Duke's considera-

tion ; he must settle that. All we had to do was to ascertain whether the Duke and Duchess liked the match or not, because I could never suffer my daughter to enter a family where she was not likely to be well received."

"Certainly not," observed Mrs. Sacker, with a shake of the head.

"Indeed, she herself would never hear of such a thing," added Mrs. Flather, recollecting the terms of the letter.

"I'm sure not," observed the complaisant Mrs. Sacker.

"The Marquis, of course, is very much attached to Emma," continued Mrs. Flather ; "and I'm sure I pity him most sincerely ; but that golden rule of doing by others as we would be done by, precludes the idea of my encouraging the thing in opposition to his parents. For my part, indeed, I should much prefer her marrying a man more in her own rank of life ; but these attachments will spring up, despite of all the care we can take ; nor would parents, perhaps, be altogether right in discouraging them where no obstacle presented itself. When there does, as in this case, there is but one course for us to pursue."

"Very honourable of you, I'm sure," observed Mrs. Sacker.

"Hard as the task is, I'll not shrink from it," rejoined Mrs. Flather, unbagging her pocket handkerchief—out came the copy of Emma's letter.

"There's a copy of her letter releasing the Marquis," observed Mrs. Flather, picking it off the floor; "you may take it home if you like," added she, handing it to Mrs. Sacker, "perhaps your husband might like to see it."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Sacker, rising and meeting Mrs. Flather with the proffered document.

"I may again say, I was never very anxious for it," observed Mrs. Flather, with a composing sigh.

Mrs. Sacker stared as if she could hardly swallow that.

"Unequal matches," continued Mrs. Flather, "are not desirable things."

"Perhaps not," observed the cautious Mrs. Sacker.

"Seldom productive of happiness," sighed Mrs. Flather again.

"*Hem!*" coughed Mrs. Sacker.

"Not that I wish to say a word in disparagement of the Marquis of Bray," added Mrs. Flather; "and if the Duke and Duchess had been

anxious or agreeable, of course I should have thought it my duty to stifle my feelings, and meet them half way ; but the slightest symptom of an objection determined me, and I assured the Duke and Duchess at once that they had nothing to fear and everything to expect from me, for, hard as the task was of putting an end to the rational attachment of two interesting and amiable young people, I would not shrink from it."

"Very noble of you, I'm sure," observed Mrs. Sacker.

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Flather ; "on the contrary, I assure you, were it not for the unhappiness the step must occasion the young people, I would *infinitely* prefer, as I said before, seeing Emma marry some nice steady young man in the neighbourhood in her own rank of life," Mrs. Flather thinking she would have to fall back on James Blake as soon as possible.

"No fear but there will be plenty delighted to have her," observed the obsequious Mrs. Sacker.

"O, she has had many excellent offers," replied Mrs. Flather ; "Emma might have been married over and over again if she'd liked."

"I am sure of it," replied Mrs. Sacker.

"James Blake, for instance," said Mrs. Flather, "is dying for her."

“So I hear,” assented Mrs. Sacker; “and a very fine young man he is,” added she.

“Very,” replied Mrs. Flather, “good principled young man. It may seem strange, perhaps,” simpered Mrs. Flather, as if doubting whether Mrs. Sacker could swallow it or not—“it may seem strange, but I have always told Emma I would rather see her marry Mr. Blake than the Marquis of Bray.”

“I hope she will still do so, then,” replied Mrs. Sacker; “I’m sure I wish she may, for they are both great favourites of mine.”

“Emma’s hard to please,” observed Mrs. Flather.

“She’s young, and has plenty of time to look about her,” replied Mrs. Sacker.

With these and such like honest observations, the two ladies beguiled the twenty minutes’ sit of which the visit was composed, and Mrs. Sacker finally took her departure with the warmest expressions of attachment to mother and daughter, and the strongest assurances that the copy of the letter would be considered “strictly confidential,” a term too well understood among ladies to require any explanation from us. Mrs. Sacker then took her departure.

A party of pleasure, consisting of our worthy

Squire and Mrs. Jorrocks, Mrs. and five Miss Trotters, and James Blake, met Mrs. Sacker at the turn of the road leading up to the Manse, and nearly worried her with questions as to the result.

“*And ’ow’s it to be?*” bellowed Mr. Jorrocks at the top of his voice, advancing towards her; adding, “*arn’t I right?*”

“*Yes or no?*” asked Mrs. Trotter, rising up and down on her toes, with anxiety depicted on her fine, bright, olive complexion. Eliza’s black eyes sparkled brighter than usual.

“Tell us all about it,” said Mrs. Jorrocks, seating herself on the mile-stone.

“For goodness’ sake, don’t make such a noise!” exclaimed the cautious Mrs. Sacker; “consider, if Mrs. Flather should hear of this meeting she’ll blame me altogether—think we are all in league.”

“Never mind,” said Mr. Jorrocks, “I’ll underwrite you.”

“Do tell us!” “Don’t kill us with suspense!” “What’s the use of making a mystery about nothing,” and similar inquiries, now flew at Mrs. Sacker; who, panting with the haste she had hurried away to communicate the news, could hardly articulate.

“ *Pray* don’t make such a noise,” gasped she ; “ consider, if Mrs. Flather should hear—what *would* she think of me ? ”

“ That you’re a werry pretty little ’ooman,” replied Mr. Jorrocks ; adding, in a whisper to himself, “ at least *I* do.”

“ You don’t know *who* may be watching,” ejaculated Mrs. Sacker. “ It isn’t right — it *really* isn’t—you shouldn’t have come. She’ll think we are all in league ; that it’s a preconcerted plan. *Pray* walk quietly down,” urged she. “ Divide into two parties. Come, Mr. Jorrocks, *do*,” urged she, addressing herself to the Cockney Squire. “ You go first, like a good man,” added she, giving him a gentle push of the arm.

“ Tell us about it,” replied Mr. Jorrocks, “ and we’ll go ’ome like lambs.”

“ Tell you what ? ” said Mrs. Sacker, in full flutter.

“ Whether Emma’s caught the Markis or not,” responded Mr. Jorrocks.

“ Caught the Marquis ! ” repeated Mrs. Sacker. “ *Yes, no doubt she has.* ”

“ Hurrah ! ” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, throwing his hat in the air. “ Hurrah ! ” repeated he,

catching and throwing it up again; adding, "*I told you so.* Won two 'ats!"

"I don't believe it!" exclaimed Mrs. Jorrocks.

"Nor I!" responded Mrs. Trotter.

"Nor I!" added James Blake.

"*Nor you!*" roared Mr. Jorrocks, looking irately at the last speaker. "Vy shouldn't you believe the lady, sir?" adding, "Is that your Christian doctrine, sir?"

"Do you mean they're agoin' to be married?" asked Mrs. Jorrocks, sidling up to Mrs. Sacker.

"I didn't say they were going to be married," snapped Mrs. Sacker, dreading the consequences of this unexpected and unwelcome "*rencontre.*"

"Then vot did you say?" snapped Mrs. Jorrocks in return.

"O, do walk quietly on," entreated Mrs. Sacker; adding, "and I'll tell you all about it. Only don't make such a noise and hubbub."

"Vell, tell *me*, quietly," said Mr. Jorrocks, poking up to Mrs. Sacker, and putting his arm through hers; adding, as they walked on together, "is she a goin' to be married to the Markis or not?"

"*No she's not,*" replied Mrs. Sacker in an under tone.

“ *No, she’s not !* ” screamed Mr. Jorrocks, “ vy didn’t you say this werry minute that she was ? ”

“ No, I said she’d *caught* the Marquis,” replied Mrs. Sacker.

“ Caught him ! ” ejaculated Mr. Jorrocks ; adding, “ Vy vot do you call catchin’ on him if they don’t tie him hup ? Safe bind, safe find, I say.”

“ *O then, she’s not !* ” screamed Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Jorrocks, clapping their hands and exulting. Joy beamed on the faces of the rest.

“ The ’ooman’s mad—mad as a March hare,” muttered Mr. Jorrocks, taking his arm out of Mrs. Sacker’s.

“ Tell us ’ow it is ? ” asked Mrs. Jorrocks, supplying her husband’s place, and trying the soothing system.

“ Well, you see, the Duke and Duchess are *rather* against it,” said Mrs. Sacker ; “ and Mrs. Flather won’t hear of it unless they are agreeable.”

“ ‘ *Ookey Walker !* ’ ” grunted Mr. Jorrocks ; adding, “ whoever thought they’d be for it.”

“ And vot was she doin’ at Donkeyton ? ” asked Mrs. Jorrocks.

"I don't know that," replied Mrs. Sacker :
"possibly went to talk to the Duke and Duchess about it."

"What a fool the woman must be," observed Mrs. Trotter, glad that Mrs. Flather had had the errand instead of herself.

"Why, there's no doubt that the Marquis was desperately attached to Emma," observed Mrs. Sacker.

"Just as much as he was to half a dozen other girls," observed Mrs. Trotter, looking at Eliza, who was busy looking at James Blake.

"*Then it's no go,*" muttered Mr. Jorrocks, putting his hands behind his back, preparing to saunter home alone.

"*Quite finished,*" observed Mrs. Sacker. "Miss Emma, indeed, is quite of her mamma's opinion, and has written a most proper letter to the Marquis on the subject."

"Vot about?" asked Mr. Jorrocks, turning short round.

"Releasing him from his engagement," replied Mrs. Sacker.

"That's all nonsense," observed Mrs. Jorrocks.

"They were never engaged," added Mrs. Trotter.

"Only wanted to be," rejoined Mrs. Jorrocks ;
"that's to say, *she* wanted."

"I assure you it's the fact," replied Mrs. Sacker.

"Who told you so?" inquired Mrs. Jorrocks.

"Mrs. Flather herself. Indeed, I've a copy of the letter in my bag," added she, recollecting herself and diving into her reticule for it.

"Let's see it," said Mr. Jorrocks, taking it out of her hand as she tumbled it up above the miscellaneous collection of the bag. "I'll read it to you," said he, stopping short. "I'll get on to this 'ere gate," added he. So saying, he climbed up, and seating himself on the top-rail, unfolded the wire-wove paper, and read the well written document to the anxious circle below.

"My dear Lord"—

"Faith, but they've been pretty frindly," observed Mr. Jorrocks, looking down at the group.

"My dear Lord," repeated he, "so long as I conceived your wisits were sanctioned by your parents, I freely confess, I was proud to receive your attentions."

"Wisits!" exclaimed Mrs. Jorrocks, "he never made no wisits to them! It was to Jun and me."

"Except after the farmer's ball, when he slept there *by mistake*," sneered Mrs. Trotter.

"Does she say she was proud to receive his attentions?" asked Eliza of James Blake.

“ Silence in the court,” cried Mr. Jorrocks ; adding, “ or I’ll commit some on you.”

“ I freely confess, I was proud to receive your attentions, but,” read he, “ no power on airth—no rank—no title—(no nothin’)” added Mr. Jorrocks, “ could induce me to receive them without their consent.”

“ That’s comin’ it strong,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, looking down on the anxious faces of the auditors. “ There must have been summut in it.”

“ I don’t believe it for all that !” exclaimed Mrs. Trotter.

“ Nor I neither,” rejoined Mrs. Jorrocks.

“ The girl’s always fancying the men are in love with her,” added Mrs. Trotter.

“ She’s none so captiwatin’,” sneered Mrs. Jorrocks.

Mr. Jorrocks read on—

“ I could not be insensible to the objections difference of station might create, though, perhaps, I had reason to believe they would be overlooked in my case—”

“ I wonders what that means,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, looking knowingly up at the sky. He could not hit upon the reason, so he resumed his reading—

“ Finding, however, from my dearest mamma’s interview with the Duke and Duchess of Donkeyton this morning, that such is not likely to be the case, I lose not a moment in declaring that I will never enter any family without the full approbation—nay, encouragement of its members.”

“ There’s for you ! ” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks. “ She’ll ’ave it all on the square. ‘ Love me, love my dog,’ and so on,”

“ Sour grapes, I think ! ” observed Mrs. Trotter.

“ I say ditto to that,” added Mrs. Jorrocks.

“ *I say silence !* ” retorted our Squire ; adding, “ or I’ll horder some on you hout o’ court.”

He then read on—

“ This being the case, you will not be surprised at receiving this hurried communication, relinquishing, as I now do, all claim and pretension to your hand.”

“ Ay ! ay ! but that’s comin’ to the pint,” nodded Mr. Jorrocks.

“ Story of the well-bred dog, I think ! ” observed James Blake.

“ I cannot conclude without wishing your lordship, in all sincerity, a more exalted and more fortunate choice.”

“’Umbug!’” grunted Mrs. Jorrocks.

“Your merits, your wealth, and your connections forbid any doubt on that point, though I am equally sure you will never meet with any one more sincerely, devotedly-attached, than your Emma.”

“God save the Queen, Prince Halbert, et kids,” added Mr. Jorrocks, folding up the letter, and descending from his gate to return it to Mrs. Sacker. “A werry pretty letter, and werry well written,” said he, handing it back to her with a bow.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“ Take a friendly cup of tea with us.”

Mrs. FLATHER had a little tea party a few evenings after, as soon as the model of propriety's sick head-ache enabled her to see company.

Mrs. and Mr. Jorrocks, Mr. and Mrs. Trotter, Mr. and Mrs. Sacker, and Miss Emily Badger, a cousin of Mrs. Sacker's, were the guests.

The model of propriety was decked out for the occasion in plain white muslin, with a little lace cap with blue flowers and ribbons.

Mr. Jorrocks, though not much of a “tea and turn-out man,” was glad to go to anything to vary the monotony of evenings at home with Mrs. Jorrocks. As the days shortened, and farming pursuits relaxed, he felt more keenly the difference between town and country.

In London a man-of-business' day does not

commence till the evening, when everything is over in the country, save the easy-chair and the newspaper. The Londoner has his theatres, his billiard-rooms, his libraries, his reading-rooms, his houses of call, his convivial meetings—something fresh for every night in the week; but night draws its sombre veil over everything in the country, and the winter dulness is only helped along by anticipation of parties for the next full moon.

“Mind, you are engaged to us the next full moon.”

Mrs. Flather’s *soirée* being extra, there was no full moon—no moon at all, indeed.

The copy of the letter to the Marquis having been entrusted in confidence to Mrs. Sacker, and shown by her in a similar spirit, of course the rest of the party felt bound to be ignorant of it, and Mrs. Flather being equally constrained to believe that they were so, matters threatened to be rather awkward at starting.

“Now mind, Jun, you don’t let out that you knows anything about the match being off,” observed Mrs. Jorrocks out of her calash, as they call the cab-head things tea-drinking ladies in the country put over their smart turbans and

flowered caps. "Now mind, Jun, you don't let out that you knows anything about the match bein' off," observed Mrs. Jorrocks to her spouse, as, in company with the Trotters and Miss Emily Badger, they trooped up to the Manse.

"Do you think I can't keep a secret as well as you?" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, buttoning his zephyr about him. "The evenin's are a gettin' cool," observed he to Mrs. Trotter—"the dew'll be strong as we return, and there's never no Broughams, nor patent safety's nor nothin' to get."

"We never care about those sort of things in the country," replied Mrs. Trotter out of her cab-head. "Cloaks and thick shoes," added she, "are all we want."

The ladies having to put the finishing stroke to their toilettes, were met by a maid, who showed them up-stairs, where, with the aid of a looking-glass, they repaired any little derangement of costume the cab-heads and cloaks had occasioned. Mr. Jorrocks and little Trotter were shown into the parlour.

Mr. Jorrocks, who still had a *penchant* for Mrs. Flather, and moreover saw that the women wanted to run her down, met her with more than usual *empressement* and squeezed Emma's

and her hands with sundry winks and contortions of countenance, meant to indicate "never mind, better luck next time."

The ladies presently came in, and their inquiries were exchanged about each other's healths, and hopes that Emma's head-ache had left her, with many "so sorries to hear she had been indisposed—so glad to see she was looking so well."

They then formed themselves into a circle round the pocket-full of fuel they called a fire, and an agreeable circle it was, the ladies longing to pull caps, and the gentlemen staring vacantly at the yellow gassey smoke as it curled up the chimney. The ladies tried hard to drive a conversation—talked of worsted-work, patch-work, and all sorts of work.

At length the tea-tray made its appearance, and things began to brighten up—more candles too came in. The hissing urn followed, and then came bread and cakes of various forms and composition. The party adjourned from the fire to the round table on which the things were placed, Mrs. Jorrocks squeezing in next Mrs. Flather, Mr. Jorrocks got between Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Sacker, while Emma and the other two

filled up the remaining places. The women talked, the men talked, they all talked together. Cup succeeded cup, and toast succeeded cake, and cake succeeded toast. Conversation became general. Claudius Sacker was a great talker, and did his best to earn his hyson. Mr. Jorrocks talked, Mrs. Sacker talked, and they all talked.

Mrs. Jorrocks got Mrs. Flather into a quiet mumble — in what is called a conversational chair—after the din of cups and saucers had subsided, and very soon led the way to the Marquis and Donkeyton Castle.

“Well,” said she, “and is it to be a match between”—(nodding to Emma, who was patronizing Miss Badger) “and the Markiss?”

“No,” faltered Mrs. Flather; “haven’t you heard?” asked she, involuntarily.

“No,” replied Mrs. Jorrocks, with the greatest composure.

“It’s a long story,” observed Mrs. Flather.

“Is it?” replied Mrs. Jorrocks; “I should like to hear it.”

“Well, but you’ll have the kindness not to repeat it,” said Mrs. Flather.

“Certainly not,” replied Mrs. Jorrocks.

"Promise me that!" said Mrs. Flather, clearing her throat with a hem.

"Not for the world," responded Mrs. Jorrock.

"Why, you see, I was never particularly anxious for it," observed Mrs. Flather.

Mrs. Jorrock coughed.

"Not that I think there is much against the young man," added she; "but I don't think these unequal matches are desirable; besides, the Marquis is very young."

"He'll mend o' that," observed Mrs. Jorrock.

"Still youth is volatile," continued Mrs. Flather, "and exposed to the many temptations of London, there is no saying but he might have repented, and then what a shocking thing it would have been for Emma."

"But she would have been a Marchioness for all that," observed Mrs. Jorrock.

"Wealth and titles won't compensate for the want of domestic happiness," sighed Mrs. Flather.

"She'd have had diamonds," observed Mrs. Jorrock, "powdered footmen, and a coachman with three rolls of curls to his wig."

“Indeed,” said Mrs. Flather, imagining it was part of the equipage of a marchioness.

“Been a lady patroness of Almack’s,” added Mrs. Jorrocks, considering whether they were all duchesses or marchionesses, or how.

“Well, for all that,” sighed Mrs. Flather, anxious to put an end to Mrs. Jorrocks’s tantalizing catalogue, “I cannot but think I did right in putting an end to the thing.”

“Then was it a reg’lar engagement?” asked Mrs. Jorrocks, incredulously.

“*Decidedly so,*” replied Mrs. Flather. “What made you ever doubt it?”

“Because our friend over there,” said she, nodding towards where Mrs. Trotter sat hard at work trying to coax Mr. Jorrocks out of a subscription, “thought she had got him for Eliza.”

“*Eliza !*” sneered Mrs. Flather, “Eliza had just as much chance with him as you have.”

“Emma had booked him before then, had she?” asked Mrs. Jorrocks.

“The Marquis had booked Emma rather,” whispered Mrs. Flather. “Emma’s not a girl that everybody can gain,” added she.

“Not unless they are well gilt,” thought Mrs. Jorrocks.

"It don't do for women to be too easily caught," observed she. "Men think nothin' on them. Jun sutured me amost three years afore I would 'ave him."

"That was a long time," replied Mrs. Flather, who had heard Jun say it was only three weeks.

"I had a many grand offers," observed Mrs. Jorrocks, with a shake of the head, as if she ought to have done better.

"So has Emma," rejoined Mrs. Flather, anxious to keep to the subject of her daughter and the Marquis.

"Emma will do well yet," observed Mrs. Jorrocks, looking at the model of propriety, who was now pretending to talk to little Trotter, but in reality was cocking her ears to catch what she could of the dialogue between Mrs. Jorrocks and her mamma.

"No fear of that," responded Mrs. Flather. "She's in no hurry, and has plenty of time to look about her."

"There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out on't," observed Mrs. Jorrocks. "She'll get a markiss yet, or at all ewents a baronet."

"Oh, I don't wish for any such thing," sighed Mrs. Flather. "Let her keep single, or marry

some quiet respectable man in her own rank of life, who'll appreciate her for her worth; for she's an angel of a girl," added she.

"So everybody says," replied Mrs. Jorrocks, thinking whether it was the last Sunday or the Sunday before she heard Emma had given the cook a good beating for not letting her eat the apple tart she had made for dinner at luncheon.

"There will be plenty glad enough to get her," observed Mrs. Flather, with a toss of her head.

"Plenty!" replied Mrs. Jorrocks.

"James Blake, for instance, is dying for her at this moment."

"James Blake is agoin' to marry Eliza Trotter," observed Mrs. Jorrocks, with a most malicious grin, unable any longer to contain herself.

Mrs. Flather almost fainted. James was the only real card they had in view. What might have followed remains matter of speculation, for just as Mrs. Jorrocks announced this destructive intelligence, our Cockney Squire, who had been in close confab with Claudius Sacker for some minutes, caused a diversion throughout the room, by calling out at the top of his voice to little Trotter, "I say, Trot! 'ow old do you say the Markis o' Bray is?"

“How old!” repeated Trotter, who had been pottering to Emma about double primroses, much to her annoyance, for just as she got hold of the beginning of a sentence, so as to guess what her mamma and Mrs. Jorrocks were talking about, he was sure to put her out by returning to the subject; “Why, he’s just of age,” replied Mr. Trotter.

“No, not the man Markis—the ball Markis; my Markis in fact,” retorted Mr. Jorrocks.

“Oh, your Marquis,” repeated little Trotter, “why, he’s two year old—rising three.”

“You’re sure of that?” asked Mr. Jorrocks.

“Why, I can’t *swear* to it,” replied little Trotter, fearing the justice wanted to entrap him as a witness, “I’ve always heard so. Why do you ask?” added he.

“Vy, because Sack, here,” punching the doctor in the ribs with his thumb, “has picked up a cock and bull story, I may well call it, about his bein’ three year old, and says, Tommy Clotworthy, who had the second-best two-year-old at the show, is a goin’ to claim the premium from me.”

“Indeed!” ejaculated several.

“That will be very awkward,” observed Mrs. Trotter.

"*Werry*," replied Mr. Jorrocks, diving into his breeches pocket, and stirring up his silver.

"Not that they'd get a wast'," added he, "if they only took wot I brought 'ome; for wot with his lordship's expenses—wot with Pigg's—wot with my own, and wot with drinkin' of his lordship's 'ealth, I was a most two pund's out o' pocket; at least there was one pund eighteen and ninepence unaccounted for. There might part on it ha' rolled out o' my breeches pocket, to be sure," observed Mr. Jorrocks, "for while I was hup speakin,' some idle and disorderly person took my seat out from an under me, and I couped my creels out o' the back o' the tent. *Haw, haw, haw*," added he, "thinks I never got sich a capsize i' my life. *Haw, haw, haw*," continued he, laughing at the thoughts of it.

"Well, but what will you do about the premium?" inquired Trotter, still fearing Mr. Jorrocks might call upon him, from what he had said.

"Vy, I don't know about that," replied Mr. Jorrocks. "I doesn't care nothin' about the prize," added he, "but in course I shalln't see the reputation of my ball compromised without a tussle. If the Duke o' Donkeyton's farm gen-

tleman says he's only a two-year-old, vy I'll let Clot do his worst. I'll bring the ball into the Court of Exchequer, and let Baron Halderson have a look in his turnip trap. Haw, haw, haw," chuckled he; "I'll get Murphy to defend him!" continued he. "Crickey, but I fancy I see his lordship rollin' about, clearin' the big wigs and all the spectators out o' court, like so many cobwebs."

"Its 'alf-past eight," at length observed Mr. Jorrocks, looking at his great noisy watch, "time we were a toddlin'—night hair's bad for the chest."

"Wouldn't you take a little wine and water?" inquired Mrs. Flather, at length finding her tongue, after the shock Mrs. Jorrocks had given her.

"A leetle brandy and water, if you've no objection," replied Mr. Jorrocks.

"I'm afraid we're out of brandy," rejoined Mrs. Flather.

"Never mind," said Mr. Jorrocks, "rum 'll do as well."

"I'm sorry we haven't any rum either," replied Mrs. Flather; "the cat broke the last bottle yesterday."

"I thought I smelt it as I came in," observed

Mr. Jorrocks, sniffing about. "Howsomever," added he, "never mind, we shall be all the better without it in the mornin';" with which philosophical reflection Mr. Jorrocks gave the signal, and the party were presently on their legs; the ladies scuttling away for their cab-heads and shawls—the gentlemen pocketing their pumps, pulling on their thick shoes, identifying their hats and zephyrs.

Having transformed themselves into as many "Guys," there was such saluting and squeezing of hands—such good nightings among the present, and best lovings to the absent—the more they disliked each other, the greater being the *empressement*.

At length the guests got into the open air, and after waiting a second or two staring up at the dark starless clouds, they declared it was only the first coming out that made it look so black, and they had no doubt they would manage well enough after they had been out a little.

The proffered lanthorn being declined, and the receding footsteps sounding in the dark, amid reiterated "good nights," and hopes of "safe arrivals at home," Mrs. Flather and Emma closed the door upon their dear departing friends.

CHAPTER XL.

“ *Night*, sable goddess ! from her *ebon* throne
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o’er a slumbering world.”

“ THE Marchioness don’t look so far amiss considerin’ her misfortin’,” grunted Mr. Jorrocks to the first cloaked figure he ran against, who happened to be Mrs. Trotter.

“ She’s not one that will die of love,” retorted the rival parent.

“ But she might die of the loss of a coronet,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, “they are far wuss to meet with nor men in ’ats.”

“ She never had any chance for him,” snapped Mrs. Trotter.

“ Humph,” grunted Mr. Jorrocks, recollecting the consultation Mrs. Trotter and he had had

together respecting the Marquis and Eliza. "Then, you think Emma's not one o' the dyin' sort," observed Mr. Jorrocks, running foul of a tree.

"Not she!" exclaimed Mrs. Trotter.

"Per'aps you'll take my harm," observed Mr. Jorrocks, thinking Mrs. Trotter's bright eyes might guide him safer than his own.

They then joined arms.

"I vish old Hursa Major would 'ave the kindness to show us his mug," observed Mr. Jorrocks, looking up at the dark firmament. "Us farmers call him the *plough*," added he, "and I think he should return the compliment by lightin' us 'ome."

"I think so too," replied Mrs. Trotter, adding, "you don't think Emma pretty, do you?"

"Pretty!" repeated Mr. Jorrocks, "pretty well—nothin' to set the Thames on fire;" adding, "are you much of a star gazer?"

"*Not at all*," replied Mrs. Trotter, vexed at Mr. Jorrocks's shirking.

"I am," said he, "crazeyologist, bampologist, starologist, wenusologist, all that sort o' thing sort o man," added he.

Mrs. Trotter was silent.

"The Shepherds in the beautiful plains o' Egypt and Babylon were the first persons wot paid much attention to the stars," observed Mr. Jorrocks, "partly for want of amusement, not having no theatres, nor masquerades, nor circuses to go to; and partly to enable them to scrimmage about the country at nights."

Mrs. Trotter was still silent.

"I confess I should ha' liked to ha' been a shepherd i' one of them shires," continued Mr. Jorrocks; "'specially if I'd 'ad a fine ooman to darn my stockings, and so on," added he in an undertone, and a squeeze of Mrs. Trotter's arm.

"Mrs. Flather, perhaps," observed Mrs. Trotter.

"No, not Mrs. Flather," replied Mr. Jorrocks, with an emphasis; "some un nearer 'and."

"You old goose," thought Mrs. Trotter.

"It's confounded dark," observed Mr. Jorrocks, grazing a gate-post with his shoulder. "If Saturn has his five moons as they say, I'd wish he'd show a light to night."

"You should have accepted Mrs. Flather's offer of her lanthorn," observed Mrs. Trotter.

"I think we did wrong not," observed Mr. Jorrocks, adding, "I'd no notion it was so dark."

"It's lucky the road's pretty good to find," observed Mrs. Trotter.

"Ay, but roads look werry different at nights to what they do by day," observed Mr. Jorrocks, "summut like women in that respect," added he; "nothing personal, in course," continued the gallant Squire.

"Of course not," replied Mrs. Trotter. "Perhaps you think Mrs. Flather does," added she.

"Can't say I've ever examined Mrs. Flather, particklar by candle-light," observed Mr. Jorrocks.

"Nay, you saw her to-night," replied Mrs. Trotter.

"True, but there was sich a bevy of beauties that I never had time to look her over—*narrowly*, at least," added Mr. Jorrocks.

Mrs. Trotter was silent, she saw our friend would not be trotted out.

"That Miss Hemily Badger arn't a bad lookin' girl," observed Mr. Jorrocks, after a pause, "well set up gal, I should say, good figure-'ead too."

"As fine as Emma, do you think?" asked Mrs. Trotter.

"Finer nor Emma, I should say," replied Mr. Jorrocks.

"More expression, more animation," rejoined Mrs. Trotter.

"Hemma's more sedate lookin'," observed Mr. Jorrocks.

"Emma's a cold-blooded one," observed Mrs. Trotter.

"I doesn't like a cold-blooded ooman," replied Mr. Jorrocks, squeezing his companion's arm again.

"I wonder whom she'll take up with next," observed Mrs. Trotter.

"Isn't this her first?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

"*First!*" exclaimed Mrs. Trotter, "not by a good many--not, I dare say, that she ever had an offer, but she's tried for them, hard enough."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Jorrocks, thinking the mothers' stories didn't tally.

"Perhaps she'll be trying Mr. Blake again," observed Mrs. Trotter.

"Perhaps," replied Mr. Jorrocks.

"She may save herself the trouble of that, though," chuckled Mrs. Trotter.

"He's not to be catched, isn't he?" asked Mr. Jorrocks.

"*He is caught,*" said Mrs. Trotter, with emphasis.

“Who by?” inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

“Who do you think?” returned Mrs. Trotter.

“Miss Badger, p’raps,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, thinking Eliza would not have him after her Marquis *coup*.

“Guess again,” said Mrs. Trotter.

“Eliza, p’raps,” said Mr. Jorrocks.

“You have it!” exclaimed Mrs. Trotter.

“And doesn’t Mrs. Flather know?” asked he.

“Not yet,” said Mrs. Trotter. “He only offered this afternoon.”

“Yes, she does,” interposed Mrs. Jorrocks, who, aided by the darkness of the night, had fallen into line with our hero and his fair friend.

“What, you havn’t blabbed, have you?” exclaimed Mrs. Trotter.

Mrs. Jorrocks was silent, feeling she had committed herself.

“Well, now, I must say that is very wrong of you!” exclaimed Mrs. Trotter, “*very wrong indeed!* I told it you in the strictest confidence, and she was just the last person under the sun that I should like to have had it told to,” added Mrs. Trotter, from the depths of her calash.

“But she was sure to ’ear of it,” snuffed Mrs. Jorrocks, from hers.

“*Sure to hear of it!*” repeated Mrs. Trotter, boiling up; “no doubt she was; but there was no reason why you should deprive *me* of the pleasure of telling her.”

“That woman, Mrs. Flather,” said she to Mr. Jorrocks, “has spited me more than words can tell; and just as I was going to have my revenge, I’m done out of it in this way. *It’s too bad!*” exclaimed she in a loud tone of voice.

The parties behind hearing something going on before, now pressed to the front, and at this critical moment, a rope that had been tied across the road just as it led into the turnpike, took the front rank by the heels, who were immediately followed by those behind. Down they all went, two layers of them. Great was the scramble!

Mr. and Mrs. Jorrocks, with Mrs. Trotter between them made the first layer; then came Claudius Sacker and his wife, with Miss Emily Badger. Little Trotter had a tumble to himself at the side. Mr. Jorrocks lost his wig, Mrs. Jorrocks’s front came down over her nose, and Claudius Sacker’s gold-headed cane went into Miss Emily Badger’s mouth.

A reward of two pounds was offered, next day,

for the discovery of the wig and the offender or offenders who tied the rope across the road, but without success. Popular opinion pointed to Benjamin; but his worship never suspected him.

The wig was taken from a Scotch terrier, who, having fought with two other dogs for the retention of his prize, it may be supposed not to have been worth much when Mr. Jorrocks got it back.

CHAPTER XLI.

“On us each circling year doth make a prey.”

“From Rome to Terracina, from Capua to Naples,” observed the Duke of Donkeyton, travelling with his eye-glass down Orgiazzi’s map of Italy, along with young hopeful, the Marquis of Bray, with whom he was arranging a route for a tour.

The Duke and Duchess had had long and anxious confabs relative to their hopeful scion, caused, not a little, perhaps, by Mrs. Flather’s invasion. They thought he would be getting into mischief, and, painful as the separation would be, they had determined to send him abroad for a year, under the superintendence of a steady old file, Professor Yarnington, one of the old straight-cut coat, upright-collared, pig-tailed, silk stocking, short black gaitered breed of tutors; a most orthodox-looking bear-leader.

The Duke and the Marquis had set off on their travels after luncheon, and had advanced as far into the bowels of Italy as indicated in the opening sentence of this chapter, when, just as his Grace, with a twirl of his eye-glass, was throwing himself back in the luxurious depths of his arm-chair, to twaddle about the wonders of Naples, and his own exploits there as a youngster, the library door opened, and the groom of the chamber approached at a somewhat hurried pace for a well-trained menial, bearing a rich salver with a black-sealed letter upon it.

His Grace broke the seal, and proceeded to read it. Thus it ran :—

“ Reform Club.

“ DEAR DUKE,

“ Poor Guzzlegoose* has succeeded in killing himself at last. He had been living at the Castle, at Richmond, for a fortnight, and died this morning of a most inordinate dinner. I happen to be passing through town, and dispatch a special messenger with this by the evening train, as, of course, no time should be lost. Truly yours.

“ LOOKALIVE.”

* The county member.

"God bless us!" said the Duke, throwing up his white whiskered head, "sad thing! very sad thing!" handing the Marquis the letter, "sorry for him, monstrous sorry for him."

"Pay the messenger. No answer," added he to the servant.

* * * * *

"Poor man!" said the Marquis with a laugh, handing back the letter, "he has long been trying to do it."

"Great eater! monstrous great eater!" said the Duke.

"He was *that*!" rejoined the Marquis.

"Great drinker! monstrous great drinker!" added the Duke. "However, my dear Jeems," continued he, folding up the map of Italy, "we must improve the opportunity—be moving; important event! monstrous important event! Kind of Lookalive to send us the intelligence; monstrous kind of Lookalive to send us the intelligence!" added he, ramming the map back into its case without regard to the folds.

The first thing a great man does, is to send for his lawyer. The lawyer is to the mind what the doctor is to the body. The king sends for his chancellor, the duke for his solicitor; accordingly,

a messenger was dispatched to Sellborough, for Mr. Smoothington ; and the Marquis was recommended to wipe away all trivial fond records of Rome and Terracina, Capua and Naples, from his mind, and prepare for the great struggle of political life.

Mr. Smoothington, though what is called a man of information — that is to say, a great gossip—a man who knew every-bodies' affairs in the county—was rather behind-hand in getting the news on the present occasion ; and several people had arrived in breathless haste at the castle to announce the death of Mr. Guzzlegoose, ere it reached Mr. Smoothington's ears at his office.

Having examined and cross-examined the parties who brought the intelligence, and satisfied himself of the truth of it, he had just sent his clerk footman to order the lofty landaulet, when the Duke's messenger arrived, requiring his immediate presence.

It needing no conjurer to proclaim what would be wanted, Mr. Smoothington made a hasty selection of popular addresses, and in his best black suit, with a fresh sprinkling of powder, was soon on his way to Donkeyton Castle.

Mr. Smoothington affected the Duke—indeed,

he was generally called "The Duke." He powdered his iron-grey locks, and kept the hair at the back of his head as full as possible; had a large crop of whiskers under his chin — now brushed up in full view. He also wore eye glasses, though not at all short-sighted.

Thus arrayed, he stepped into the lofty landaulet, and sitting well forward, as if fussing in the particular pocket that happened to be next a neighbour's house, he jolted away to the castle. As he went, he thought of Guzzlegoose—recalled his start in life, when at the Marquis's age, in the bloom of youth and the plenitude of looks, he was returned for the county. Thought of his maiden speech—his early promise—his maturer stand still—his later failure. Remembered his Grecian nose, when there was'nt a spec upon it—his waist when it resembled an hour-glass—thought how succeeding sessions had blotched the one and swelled the other—could hardly have believed the pale taper lad of one-and-twenty could have filled into the gross, overgrown, rubicund monster of five and forty.

"No constitution, however strong," said Mr. Smoothington, aloud to himself, "can long withstand the united effects of eating and drinking."

He then looked at his watch—calculated what time he would arrive at Donkeyton—wondered whether the Duke would ask him to dine. If so, whether he would produce any burgundy; and, if not, why not, or how otherwise.

The man of law was so long in getting to Donkeyton that the Duke began to fidget and think he could almost do without him. “Tiresome man—monstrous tiresome man,” said he to the Marquis, as he paced hurriedly up and down the spacious library. “Could do it ourselves—could do it ourselves—do believe we could do it ourselves,” observed he to young hopeful.

Just as they were preparing pens, ink, and paper, and the Duke and Duchess were busy fussing among a drawer-full of papers containing the genealogical tree, and the bills and squibs connected with his Grace’s first election for the county, the oracle arrived, and, hat in hand, waived his salams up the room.

Smoothington was a great courtier—bowed extremely low—tried to back out of rooms, an attempt which generally ended in his tumbling over a foot-stool, or almost cutting himself in two against an open door. When his hands were disengaged, he employed them in rubbing them

one over another as if he were washing them. He had a long pale, but not unpleasant face, and taking him altogether, he would have commanded five-and-forty or fifty pounds as a butler.

If he had not kept the Duke waiting, his Grace would certainly have shaken hands with him, strongly symptomatic of electioneering, and a compliment he had not paid him since Mr. Smoothington attended with the eight-and-thirty skins of parchment containing his Grace's marriage settlement. As it was, the Duke exclaimed "Ah, Mr. Smoothington, come at last!—come at last!—glad you are!—monstrous glad you are!—pray be seated!—pray be seated!"—bowing him into a vacant chair in the neighbourhood of the throne.

"Well," said he, squashing himself into the throne, and wheeling it close up to Mr. Smoothington, "you've heard poor Guzzlegoose is dead—sorry for it—monstrous sorry for it—young man—quite young man—sure he would kill himself—eat so much Perigord pye—Perigord pye—continual Perigord pye."

"Yes, he was extremely fond of Perigord pye, your Grace," observed Mr. Smoothington with a broad grin on his face, as he deposited his

hat under his chair, and began working his hands.

“ Well now,” continued his Grace, putting a sheet of paper before Smoothington, “ the first thing I suppose will be for the Marquis of Bray to issue an address, offering himself to the county.”

“ The first thing for the Marquis of Bray to do will be to issue an address offering himself to the county, as your Grace observes,” replied Mr. Smoothington, working away at his hands.

“ And, perhaps, the less we put in it the better,” added the Duke.

“ The less we put in it the better,” bowed Mr. Smoothington.

“ Then just draw up the form of what you think will do,” rejoined the Duke, handing Mr. Smoothington a pen.

Mr. Smoothington took it—looked at the nib—held it up to the light—took out his knife—pruned the feather—and thus having collected his faculties, drew the roll of precedents from his pocket.

“ Whether shall we call them, ‘ Freeholders of the county,’ or ‘ Free and Independent Electors ;’ or address them as the ‘ Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, &c., of the county,’ does your Grace

think?" inquired Mr. Smoothington, dipping his pen in ink to obey the Duke's dictation.

"Freeholders of the county," replied his Grace.

"Freeholders of the county, I think," wrote Mr. Smoothington; adding, "we must allude, I suppose, to the death of Mr. Guzzlegoose?"

"Of course," said the Duke.

Mr. Smoothington then wrote—

"To the Freeholders of the county of ———."

"GENTLEMEN,

"A vacancy having occurred in the representation of our county by the lamented death of Mr. Guzzlegoose, I hasten to offer my humble services in endeavouring to supply the loss that melancholy event has occasioned."

"Will that do, does your Grace think?" asked Mr. Smoothington, looking up.

"I think it will," replied the Duke; adding, "read it over again."

Mr. Smoothington read it over again.

"Perhaps we may put in 'my friend, Mr. Guzzlegoose'—'lamented death of my friend, Mr. Guzzlegoose,'" observed the Duke.

"I think it would be better, your Grace,"

observed Mr. Smoothington, inserting the words.

“Looks as if we identified ourselves with his opinions,” added the Duke.

“It does, your Grace,” replied Mr. Smoothington.

“May gain the extreme party,” observed the Duke, adding—“Guzzlegoose went farther than we do.”

“He did, your Grace,” acquiesced Mr. Smoothington ; “rather of the whole hog order.”

“We had better deal in generalities now, I think,” observed the Duke.

“I think we had,” agreed Mr. Smoothington.

“Suppose we say, ‘It is, I trust, unnecessary for me to enter into any detailed explanation of the principles by which my public conduct will be governed,’ ” observed the Duke ; “ ‘suffice it to say they are those which have been maintained by my family throughout many succeeding generations,’ ” added he.

“*Very good,*” observed Mr. Smoothington, reducing the sentence to writing as quick as possible.

“Then,” said the Duke, “we might say, ‘In those principles I have been educated, and it is

upon my sincere attachment to them that I ground my claim to your support.' "

"Admirable!" exclaimed Mr. Smoothington; "nothing can be better," writing it down.

The Duke then threw himself back in his chair as if overcome with fatigue, his whiskered-face turned up to the rich fret-work ceiling.

"Shall we say anything about a personal canvass, do you think?" suggested the man of law.

"Personal canvass!" repeated the Duke; "personal canvass—I don't know what to say about a personal canvass."

"We, of the liberal party, generally make a show of canvassing," observed Mr. Smoothington.

"Very true," replied the Duke, "very true; might promise them one—no occasion to make it, you know—no occasion to make it."

"Not unless there were symptoms of an opposition," replied Mr. Smoothington.

"No fear of that," rejoined the Duke, "no fear of that. We are popular—monstrous popular. Not like as if we were attempting the Tory seat. The seat is ours, you know—the seat is ours. We returned Guzzlegoose."

“Mr. Guzzlegoose always acknowledged the great obligations he was under to your Grace,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“Might say that he would take the earliest opportunity, consistently with the decorum to be observed on so melancholy an occasion, of paying his personal respects to every elector, and affording them an opportunity of ascertaining the details of his political creed, or something of that sort,” observed the Duke. “It would look as if Jeems intended doing it, and yet not bind him.”

“It would,” replied Mr. Smoothington.

“Canvasses are nasty things,” observed the Duke. “Remember a drunken fish-fag taking me in her arms, and hugging and kissing me before the crowd,” added he with a shudder.

“It is a season of great freedom,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“Might do the same by Jeems,” continued the Duke; “give him the Scotch-fiddle perhaps, or some such nasty complaint. Nasty business canvassing altogether,” added he; “should have abolished it with the Reform Bill. However, there’s no fear of a contest. No one would be fool enough to risk a crusade against our popularity. We are popular—monstrous popular, I

suppose?" asked he of the keeper of his popularity.

"Oh, *very popular indeed*," replied Mr. Smoothington with due emphasis.

"Should think so," said the Duke—"should think so—have subscribed to two organs, two churches, three races, and I don't know what else of late."

The Corn-Law League might trouble your Grace perhaps," suggested Mr. Smoothington.

"I think not," replied the Duke—"I think not," repeated he. "They don't know but Jeems, the Marquis, may be for immediate and total repeal. That address pledges him to nothing—that address pledges him to nothing."

"It does *not*, your Grace," agreed Mr. Smoothington.

"I don't think we can do better," added his Grace after a pause. "Time enough to speak out when we're pressed—time enough to speak out when we're pressed."

"It is so, your Grace," assented Mr. Smoothington.

"Just run over a fair copy of the address, then," said the Duke, "and let us hear how it reads. While you are doing it I'll order you

some wine and water, and a biscuit—a cutlet, or anything you would like to have.”

“Not anything, I am much obliged to your Grace,” replied Mr. Smoothington; “I never eat luncheon,” added he, making an effort for a dinner.

He then made the following fair copy:—

“To the Freeholders of the county of ———.

“GENTLEMEN,

“A vacancy having occurred in the representation of our county by the lamented death of my friend Mr. Guzzlegoose, I hasten to offer my humble services in endeavouring to supply the loss that melancholy event has occasioned.

“It is, I trust, unnecessary for me to enter into any detailed explanation of the principles by which my public conduct will be governed. Suffice it to say they are those which have been maintained by my family throughout succeeding generations. In those principles I have been educated, and it is upon my sincere attachment to them that I ground my claim to your support.

“I will take the earliest opportunity, consistently with the decorum to be observed on so melancholy an occasion, of paying my personal

respects to every elector ; and, in the meantime, I have the honour to subscribe myself, gentlemen, with every sentiment of respect and esteem, your very faithful, humble servant,

“ BRAY.

“ *Donkeyton Castle.*”

His Grace then took and read it.

“That will do very well,” said he, returning it. “And now have the kindness to put it in the printer’s hands immediately, and let it be advertised and placarded about the country. Much obliged to you for your attendance—sorry you can’t stay dinner—hope we shall be more fortunate another time.” With which tantalizing politeness his Grace rose to witness Mr. Smoothington’s backward retreat up the room, which he accomplished with a bump against a globe, and upsetting a banner-screen.

That modest body, the “Anti-Corn-Law League,” no sooner saw the Marquis’s address, than they inquired, through their chairman, his lordship’s opinions relative to their pet subject—the Corn Laws ; an interference that the Duke could not brook from parties unconnected with

the county, and therefore desired the Marquis to take no notice of their application.

No answer was returned. A second and third letter followed with similar success. This nettled the great law-givers who pulled the strings in London, and set all their men of weight a going in the county, men in whom the greatness of the leaders was well reflected.

Reports of these meetings were duly brought to the Castle, but the Duke's *cue* being known, the parties underrated them as much as possible. "Contemptible! monstrous contemptible!" the Duke said they were.

The next thing was his Grace reading in the Whig paper, "The Dozy Independent, or True Blue Patriot," a paragraph announcing that the League had determined upon starting a candidate in the person of "William Bowker, Esq., of Whetstone Park, in the County of Middlesex, a merchant of great weight and respectability in the City of London"—respectability, in City parlance, meaning money. The reader will be astonished how Bill, the "snuff-shop man," could have jumped so suddenly from the humble region of Eagle Street into the magnificence of Whetstone Park, in the County of Middlesex. Some may

suppose it was with the League money, while others will put it down as an improbability. Let any one, however, take his hat, and a cab (if one can get up), and explore the alley running parallel between High Holborn and Lincoln's Inn Fields, consisting, as it does, of a heterogeneous collection of stables, with garrets above, joiners' shops, cobblers' stalls, and tenement houses; a street, or bye street, or back street, a few shades worse than Eagle Street. This wretched alley is dignified by the name of "Whetstone Park," and thither Mrs. Bowker and her sister had taken refuge when their too frequent visitor, the appraiser, came again to seize for rent and taxes.

It was a lucky turn, however, for Bill, who now called himself a retired merchant living on his property. His League excursions so far had not benefited him much; he was too far gone to rally in a short time, and the more money Mrs. Bowker thought he got, the more brandy she drank, and the more mosaic jewellery she bought.

But to the Duke.

His Grace was dumb-founded when he read this announcement, nor did he recover much when, on turning to the front, or advertisement page, he read Mr. Bowker's address, announcing

that, in compliance with a numerous and highly respectable requisition, he was induced to come forward to endeavour to supply the vacancy caused by the lamented death of Mr. Guzzlegoose. It then proceeded to denounce all restrictions upon trade, more especially upon that connected with the food of man, and concluded by announcing Mr. Bowker's intention of being speedily in the county to make a personal canvass of the electors, and pledging himself to give every man an opportunity of registering his vote in favour of enlightened and rational policy. It concluded, "Believe me to be, gentlemen, with unfeigned esteem, your faithful and sincere friend,

WM. BOWKER."

"Whetstone Park."

"God bless us! who ever heard such a thing!" exclaimed the Duke, dropping the paper lifelessly from his hand. "Who ever heard of such a thing!" repeated he with a sigh; "bearded in one's own county by the Lord knows who! These are the blessings of the Reform Bill. To think that I should have lived to see such a thing! Told Grey, and Russell, and all of them that they were going too far. Never thought to get such a

return for giving up my boroughs. Oh dear ! oh dear ! what will the world come to ? To think of Jeems being defrauded of his birth-right ! ”

“ *Shalln’t be the case, though,* ” added the Duke, boiling with indignation. “ Will spend my last shilling before I’ll give up my seat.”

Thereupon his Grace took another look at the hateful address.

“ William Bowker ! ” said he, with a sneer ; “ wonder who the fellow is. Some millionaire—some opium smuggler—some impudent upstart millowner ! Oh ! that Jeems should be brought in contact with such a man. Had it been a member of some old county family, with their bigoted pride and Tory prejudices, one could have tolerated it ; but to be bearded by William Bowker, of Whetstone Park, in the County of Middlesex—a man of yesterday—a mushroom—a nobody, in fact—it’s disgusting ! ” Thereupon his Grace threw the paper on the floor.

After a few minutes spent in a reverie, during which the Duke passed rapidly through his mind the political events of his early life ; contrasted the comfortable arrangements of those days with the angry struggles of the present, he again roused himself, and determined to do something, though

he didn't know what. A man in that situation generally rings the bell, and his Grace did so.

"Send Binks here," said his Grace, as a footman answered the summons.

"Binks is out shooting, your Grace," replied the man.

"Out shooting!" repeated the Duke, "that's awkward, want to see him particularly;" his Grace's wishes increasing as the means of gratifying them diminished.

"Send a groom up to the valet's covert to desire Binks to come here directly," said his Grace impatiently.

"Tell Binks to get on to the groom's horse and ride," exclaimed the Duke as the astonished footman vanished like lightning.

"The valet's covert" was a wood kept exclusively for the amusement of those useful gentry "upper servants," and there not being many strangers in it in the course of the season, it fell more immediately to the share of Binks and the castle "gentlemen," who were now giving the pheasants a rattling. Binks was the Duke's oracle; he knew, or professed to know, everything.

* * * * *

Great was Binks's astonishment when the

hurrying groom interrupted the "*Heigh ! cock ! cock ! cock !*" of the beaters, by exclaiming, " Mr. Binks ! Mr. Binks ! come home directly ! come home directly ! the Duke wants you ! the Duke wants you ! "

* * * * *

Out came Binks, all bustle and briars, with a face like a turkey cock, wondering what had happened.

" Get on to my horse and ride ! " exclaimed the groom, jumping off and lengthening the stirrups.

" What's happened ? " inquired Binks, turning deadly pale ; " the Duke's not ill, is he ? "

" I don't know," replied the groom.

Off Binks went at a gallop.

* * * * *

Arrived at the Castle, he hurried up into the presence, attired as he was, with his whistle dangling at his velveteen jacket button-hole.

" Binks," said the Duke, " do you know where Whetstone Park is ? "

" Whetstone Park ! " repeated Binks, standing transfixed.

" Whetstone Park, in the County of Middlesex," said the Duke.

"Yes, your Grace," replied Binks, "I should say it's near Isleworth."

"Isleworth!" repeated the Duke. "Isleworth! Isleworth! that's near Sion House."

"The Duke of Northumberland's," replied Binks.

"Do you know anything of a Mr. William Bowker living there?" asked the Duke.

"Mr. William Bowker," considered Binks; "Mr. William Bowker; can't say I do. Perhaps he's a City man," suggested Binks, as a reason why he should not know him.

"*He is*," replied the Duke; "the paper here," holding up old "Dozy," "says he's going to stand for the county."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Binks, in astonishment.

"What! oppose the Marquis?" asked he.

"*So the paper says*," replied the Duke, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Must be mad," said Binks, with a toss of the head.

"I should think so," rejoined the Duke, with another shrug of the shoulders. "Send for Mr. Smoothington," added he.

Binks hurried away to execute the order.

The messenger met Mr. Smoothington at the

Gothic lodge. That eminent solicitor had been shocked on awakening in the morning, at finding his whole front covered with enormous placards containing Mr. Bowker's address, and great bills, printed in blue ink, with "BOWKER FOR EVER!" pasted over his nice green door.

The town of Sellborough was in a perfect ferment—far surpassing anything it had ever seen even in the palmiest days of borough ascendancy. The League didn't spare paper. Every house-end—every dead wall was covered with their blue bills. A cart-load had been put up during the night. As day advanced, a band paraded the streets, and public-houses were freely opened.

Mr. Smoothington was hustled by a party of drunken men, shouting, "*Bowker for ever!*" as he stepped into the rickety landaulet that was again to convey him to Donkeyton Castle. Worse than all, some wicked wag posted a great "BOWKER FOR EVER" placard against the back of the carriage.

Mr. Smoothington was terror-struck—Whetstone Park had told upon him. A man in his frame of mind was ill-calculated to advise the Duke, who was just in a state to be turned either way. If Smoothington had shown a bold front,

the Duke, who had seen none of the preparations, would have determined to show fight; as it was his own inclination, being for temporizing, Mr. Smoothington's advice would determine him that way.

* * * * *

His Grace rose from his easy chair as Mr. Smoothington entered the library, and welcomed him with a shake of the hand.

"Tell us all about it," exclaimed the Duke, hurrying the man of law into a chair. "Tell us all about it," repeated he, resuming his own seat and drawing his chair close to Mr. Smoothington's. "*Who is this Mr. Bowker?*" asked the Duke before his factotum could get out a word.

"Really, your Grace, I don't know," replied Mr. Smoothington; "the whole thing has come upon me like a clap of thunder. I certainly did hear that the League people had held meetings in Sellborough; but knowing the parties, I really looked upon them as too contemptible for notice."

"So did I," exclaimed the Duke, "so did I—impudent people—monstrous impudent people—wrote to Jeems to know his opinions—took no notice of them—took no notice of them. Tell me

now what have they done? what have they done?"

"Your Grace, I presume, has seen Mr. Bowker's address," replied Mr. Smoothington, pulling one of the enormous placards out of his pocket, unfolding, and handing it to his Grace. His Grace read—

"To the gentry, clergy, freeholders, and other electors of the county of ——.

"GENTLEMEN—

"In compliance with a numerous and highly respectable requisition—"

"Ah, this is the same as we have in 'Dozy,' " said the Duke, breaking off; "but tell me now," said he, laying it down, "has he arrived? Does any body know anything about him?"

"He is to make a public entry into Sellborough at three o'clock this afternoon, your Grace," replied Mr. Smoothington, "and the town was in a perfect uproar when I came away."

"You don't say so!" replied the Duke, holding up both hands.

"The country the same," continued Mr. Smoothington; "all along the road the people kept shouting 'Bowker for ever!' even the children in villages!"

"*Great heavens!*" exclaimed the Duke.

“ Quite true, I assure your Grace. Two or three fellows that overtook me bawled into the chaise, ‘ Bowker for ever ! ’ as they passed.”

“ You don’t say so ? ” exclaimed the Duke.

“ He is a rich man I suppose,” observed the Duke, after a long pause.

“ I should think so,” replied Mr. Smoothington. “ At all events he seems inclined to spare no expense. He’s taken the whole of the Duke’s Head.”

“ Why, that’s our House ! ” exclaimed his Grace, “ How could Tucker ever let him in.”

“ There’s dinner ordered for six. Champagne in ice—wax candles and rose water—saw the order myself,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“ Indeed ! ” said the Duke with a chuck of the head.

“ Feather bed atop of the mattress—seems a most particular gentleman,” added Mr. Smoothington.

“ Well, what do you think is best to be done ? ” asked the Duke, after conning the great placard.

“ We must do something.”

“ Upon my word it’s a critical position,” replied Mr. Smoothington. “ A contest’s a disagreeable thing.”

“ *Monstrous* disagreeable ! ” exclaimed the Duke with an emphasis.

“ This has the appearance of being an expensive one,” observed Mr. Smoothington. “ Money seems no object. Public-houses opened, and ale flowing like water.”

“ The expense is not the worst of it,” replied the Duke. “ I dread the canvass ! I dread the canvass ! ”

“ They are nasty things,” replied Mr. Smoothington.

“ Jeems is not strong,” said the Duke. “ Jeems is not strong ; might knock him up—might knock him up.”

“ Very true, your Grace,” replied Mr. Smoothington.

“ Might get insulted,” observed the Duke, thinking of the kissing he got from the fish-fag.

“ He might so, your Grace,” assented Mr. Smoothington.

“ Do you think we could enlarge upon our address so as to meet the views of the League, and get rid of the opposition ? ” asked the Duke, after a pause.

“ Let me see, your Grace,” said Mr. Smoothington, producing a printed copy of the address.

"You see there's very little in it," observed the Duke.

"Very general, your Grace," replied Mr. Smoothington, conning it over.

"I said we'd put as little in it as possible, you know," observed the Duke.

"You did so, your Grace," assented Mr. Smoothington, "and a very prudent and fortunate resolution it was."

"The least said soonest mended, always," said his Grace.

"The least said, soonest mended," repeated Mr. Smoothington, working his hands.

"Well, now, what do you think?" asked the Duke, anxious to have something for his three guineas and chaise-hire.

"There will be two points to consider," observed the man of law, after a pause; "first, whether Mr. Bowker wants a seat in parliament independently of the Corn Laws; and secondly, whether, by the Marquis of Bray declaring himself against the Corn Laws, he might not stir up an opposition from the landed interest."

"Ha!" said the Duke, "I see. The first will be the difficulty—getting rid of Bowker; I'm not afraid of an opposition among ourselves. Who's

to do it? Who's to do it? We are popular—monstrous popular! I suppose, arn't we?"

"*Very popular indeed*," replied Mr. Smoothington.

"I think if we could enlarge our liberality so as to satisfy the League, we might get rid of the opposition," observed the Duke. "*I really do*," added he.

Smoothington now saw which way the wind blew, and prepared to trim his sail accordingly.

"If it hadn't been the League, we shouldn't have had an opposition," observed he.

"Very true," replied the Duke, "very true."

"Get rid of the League—get rid of the opposition," observed Mr. Smoothington.

"Perfectly correct," said the Duke, adding, "accurate view—monstrous accurate view!"

"No time should be lost," observed Mr. Smoothington.

"No time should be lost," repeated the Duke.

"The thing is how to set about it," observed Mr. Smoothington.

"There's the difficulty," said the Duke.

"If one knew anybody who knew this Bowker, that one could set to sound him," observed Mr. Smoothington.

"That would be the way," said the Duke, "but I'm afraid that's not possible. London man—not likely to have any acquaintance down here."

“ You might go to him,” said the Duke, “ with another address—similar to the one now in circulation, with the addition of a reference to free trade, and pretend that the omission was accidental, and say that you hope, as the Marquis of Bray and himself are quite of the same way of thinking, he will bow to his Lordship’s superior claims, and let him in without a contest.”

“ Very good,” replied Mr. Smoothington, looking at the Marquis’s address, saying, “ where shall we add it ?”

“ Here, in the second paragraph,” said the Duke, reading—

“ It is, I trust, unnecessary for me to enter into any detailed explanation of the principles by which my public conduct will be governed. Suffice it to say they are those which have been maintained by my family throughout succeeding generations—the liberal improvements of our institutions, the enlargement and removal of every obstacle to the extension of our commercial prosperity,” said the Duke ; “ don’t name the Corn Laws,” said he, “ put it generally, and then the farmers won’t be frightened. Then go on again as before. ‘ In those principles I have been educated, and it is upon my sincere attachment to them that I ground my claim to your support,’ ” concluded the Duke.

“I understand your Grace,” said Mr. Smoothington. “Then I must wait upon Mr. Bowker with a copy of it?”

“Just so,” said the Duke. “Tell him either that the omission was accidental, or that we left it out for brevity’s sake.”

“I’ll do as your Grace desires,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“Be civil to the man, you know,” added the Duke.

“Certainly, your Grace.”

“The sooner it is done the better,” observed the Duke, applying his hand to the bell, saying at the same time—“Would you like a little refreshment?”

“Not any, I am much obliged to your Grace,” replied Mr. Smoothington, tying up his papers.

“Then order Mr. Smoothington’s carriage,” said the Duke, as the servant answered the summons.

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“Dispatch a messenger the moment you have anything to tell,” said his Grace, shaking hands with Mr. Smoothington, as that gentleman took his leave.

Two shakes in one day!

CHAPTER XLII.

“ When creeping murmur, and the poring dark,
Fill the wide vessel of the universe.”

It was turning dusk as Mr. Smoothington reached the hill above Sellborough, on his way back from Donkeyton Castle ; but the wind, setting towards him, sounds of music and drunken revelry were borne on its wings.

Mr. Bowker had made a grand entry into the town at three o'clock, amid the most enthusiastic demonstrations from the populace. They met his carriage at the turnpike-gate, on what had been the London, but was now called the Smoke Station road, and, having taken the four panting posters from it, had drawn him through all the principal streets, preceded by numerous splendid banners, and two bands of music.

The honourable gentleman had made a most

favourable impression. He was dressed in the height of the fashion; a mulberry-coloured frock coat with a rolling velvet collar, and a velvet waistcoat of a few shades brighter colour than the coat; an extensive flowered satin cravat, with massive electrotype chained pins, fawn-coloured leathers, and Hessian boots. His touring excursions having supplied him with an abundant stock of health, he presented a very different appearance to what the generality of country people imagine a London merchant to belike.

Altogether, he created an indescribable sensation; and as he passed along, standing up in his barouche, bowing gracefully to the ladies, they waved their handkerchiefs, and declared he was a "most charming man." Then, when he got to the Duke's Head, he appeared in the balcony of the drawing-room, and addressed them on the importance of the privilege they would soon be called upon to exercise. After alluding touchingly to the lamented death of Mr. Guzzlegoose, he called upon them to exercise the elective franchise in such a way as would be beneficial to themselves, their posterity, and their country at large, when the elegance of his man-

ner, and the graceful flourishes of his lavender-colour kidded-hand, carried all before it, and men, women, and children hurraed, and shouted “ Bowker for ever !”

But when he came to expatiate on their wrongs, pointed out the injury they sustained by the operation of the corn laws, exposed their exclusive workings for the benefit of the landlords, and called upon them to support a candidate favourable to their immediate and total repeal, the enthusiasm of the mob knew no bounds, and every hand was held up in favour of Mr. Bowker — “ Big-loaf Bowker,” as he christened himself.

After partaking of some light refreshment, he then commenced his canvass, amid the ringing of bells, the rolling of drums, the twanging of horns, and the shouts of the populace ; and if unregistered promises could have brought him in, Mr. Bowker would certainly have been member for the county.

Thus he spent the day — shaking hands — praising and admiring the children, chucking damsels under the chin—promising all things to all men. At length tired of the din and flurry

of the proceedings, Mr. Bowker was glad when five o'clock came; and with his old friend Mr. St. Julien Sinclair and his committee, Mr. Lishman, a bankrupt baker, Mr. Grace, an insolvent painter, Mr. Moss, a radical school-master, and Mr. Noble, a sold-off farmer, he left the streets to enjoy the evening repast at the Duke's Head. The landlord, Mr. Tucker, in a white waistcoat, followed by his waiter and boots in their best apparel, met the distinguished guests at the door, and conducted them to the drawing-room.

Mr. Bowker, after begging to be excused a few minutes while he went and washed his hands (a thing his committee never thought of doing), retired to his bed-room, and made a perfect revision of his costume. When he returned he was in an evening dress, smart blue coat with club buttons and velvet collar and cuffs, white neck-cloth, superbly-embroidered waistcoat, with black silk tights, and buckled shoes. He dangled a pair of primrose-coloured kid gloves in his hand.

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"We may as well ring for dinner," observed the florid swell, entering the drawing-room, and surveying the seedy crew sitting round. He gave a pull that sounded through the house.

The dinner was quickly served, and as quickly despatched by the hungry guests, several of whom had not tasted meat for a week. Champagne, hock, claret, sparkled on the board, and was swallowed by some whose stomachs were much more accustomed to beer.

As evening shades made the sherry indistinguishable from the port or claret, and Mr. Tucker, in obedience to the Squire of Whetstone Park's summons, was bearing a branching candelabra through the passage on his way up stairs, Mr. Smoothington arrived at the door of the hotel, and begged Mr. Tucker to carry his card up to Mr. Bowker.

Accordingly that functionary did so.

"Smoothington!" said Bill, glancing at the gilt-edged pasteboard with the easy indifference of a man accustomed to callers. "Smoothington! who is he?"

"Smoothington!" exclaimed the bankrupt baker and sold-off farmer, each of whom were undergoing Mr. Smoothington's polite attentions.

"Is he an elector?" inquired Bill, considering whether he should see him.

"He's the Duke of Donkeyton's solicitor," replied mine host.

"Indeed!" observed Mr. Bowker, adding, "show him into a room, and I'll ring and let you know when it's convenient for me to see him."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Tucker.

"Help yourselves, gentlemen," said Mr. Bowker, filling his glass, and passing the bottle.

"We'd better cut our sticks, I think," observed the baker, significantly, to the corn-law ruined farmer.

"I think so, too," replied the latter.

"And I'll go with you," added Mr. Grace, the insolvent painter, who lived in a house belonging to the Duke.

"O, no, gentlemen," said Bill, "don't disturb yourselves—don't disturb yourselves—I'll receive Mr. Smoothington in the other room."

"We'll go there!" exclaimed all three.—
"We'll go there!" thinking to avoid meeting Mr. Smoothington on the stairs.

"Take a bottle of wine with you!" said Bill, pushing the port towards them.

"Thank ye—we'd prefer glasses and pipes," observed Mr. Lishman.

"Ah, you are the right sort, I see," replied Bill; "nothing like Baccy."

They all then bundled out.

"Just put the table right, and take these dirty plates away," said Mr. Bowker, as the landlord answered the expected summons.

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"Now give a couple of clean glasses, and tell Mr. Smoothington I shall be happy to see him," said Bill, twirling the card about.

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Mr. Smoothington's creaking boots presently sounded on the stairs as he ascended two steps at a time. Another moment, and he was bowing and scraping in the room.

"Mr. Smoothington, I believe," said Mr. Bowker, rising and bowing to the stranger.

"The same," replied the man of law, making one of his best Donkeyton-Castle bows, and laying his hand on his heart.

"Pray, be seated," said Mr. Bowker, "pray, be seated," said he, laying his hand on the back of the chair, by the clean glasses and plate.

Mr. Smoothington put his hat under the chair, and obeyed the injunction.

“Take a glass of wine,” said Mr. Bowker, passing the bottle across. “That’s claret without the label; you’ll find it better than the port.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Mr. Smoothington, helping himself to the claret.

“Confound these country inns,” observed Mr. Bowker, “they’ve no notion of doing things properly. Only fancy! they sent up champagne without being iced!”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mr. Smoothington.

“*Did, ’pon honour,*” said Bill with a shake of the head.

“The claret’s not what it should be, but the landlord says it’s the best he can give. I’m sorry I can offer you no better dessert than these filberts and biscuits,” added he; “but to tell you the truth, I’ve had the misfortune to lose my footman and part of my luggage.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mr. Smoothington with a look of concern.

“He’s either left behind at a station, or carried past the right one; at all events, when I wanted him he was not to be found. The worst of it is,” added Bill, “he had a couple of pine-apples and some fine grapes, that my gardener—poor fellow

—thought would be a treat for me in the country.”

“Indeed !” rejoined Mr. Smoothington ; “ that is a loss :” as much as to say, the footman was nothing.

“ Why, it is a loss, as things stand,” said Bill, “ for I should have liked to have offered you a slice. As for myself I care nothing about them ; but we are supposed to grow the finest in England.”

“ You are very kind, I’m sure,” replied Mr. Smoothington, adding—“ Have you much glass ?”

“ Three houses, I think,” said Bill, “ three pineries—that’s to say, three vineries ; peach-house or two. But I care very little about a garden.”

“ Pay more attention to your park perhaps,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“ Aye, *there you have it !*” said Bill, brightening up ; “ there you have it,” repeated he. “ My friend Lord Scampington pays me the compliment of saying I’ve the finest venison in England.”

“ Have you indeed ?” exclaimed Mr. Smoothington, who dearly loved the cut of a haunch, particularly when he could get a glass of Burgundy after it.

"Help yourself," said Mr. Bowker, pushing the bottles towards him, thinking his friend would want something to wash the lies he was telling him, down with. Mr. Smoothington did as desired. Pending the gulp which followed, he bethought him of business.

"I hope you are not tired with the exertion of your canvass," observed Mr. Smoothington, rubbing hand over hand.

"Why, not tired," said Bill with an air of indifference; "not tired—*rather* bored."

"Your are on the Repeal interest, I perceive," said Mr. Smoothington.

"Repeal decidedly," replied Bill. "By the way, did you see my little English and big American loaf dangling from the balcony as you came in?"

"It was dusk," replied Mr. Smoothington; "and there was a great crowd about."

"Looking at it, I dare say," said Bill. "The best dodge yet."

"The corn laws must be repealed," observed Mr. Smoothington; "every thinking man must be satisfied of that. I think, however, it is rather a pity for two champions to start in the same ause when only one can come in."

“How so!” exclaimed Mr. Bowker, adding—
“What! is there another Richard in the field?”

“The Marquis of Bray and yourself,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“The Marquis of Bray’s the other way,” replied Mr. Bowker.

“Pardon me,” rejoined Mr. Smoothington.

“He wouldn’t declare himself, at all events,” observed Bill, “and we politicians generally consider those that are not for us are against us.”

“It was partly out of delicacy to the memory of Mr. Guzzlegoose, and partly a mistake of mine,” observed Mr. Smoothington.

“How so?” asked Bill, filling himself a bumper, and passing the bottle.

“Why, I prepared his Lordship’s address, the draft of which I now produce,” said Mr. Smoothington, diving into the back pocket of his coat, and producing some ominous red taped papers. “In this draft, as you will perceive,” continued he, opening it out, “distinct allusion is made to *all restrictions* on trade, including, of course, the corn laws; but, by an unfortunate clerical error, that important sentence was omitted, and the bill printed and posted without”—

"That's very odd," observed Mr. Bowker; adding, "shows great inattention on"—

"I was called away at the moment, to attend a relation who was dying," interrupted Mr. Smoothington.

"Well, but why didn't the Marquis answer the League letters?" asked Bill; adding, "great body of that sort is entitled to respect, even from a Marquis."

"That *was* a pity, certainly," replied Mr. Smoothington. "If I had been at home it would have been otherwise. These young men, you see, are unused to business—inattentive. I can answer for it, however, that not the slightest disrespect was meant to the League.

"*Hum!*" considered Bill.

"It certainly seems a pity," continued Mr. Smoothington, "that two candidates of the same opinions should offer themselves for the same seat; to say nothing of the probability, nay, certainty of the Tories putting up a man, and getting it from them."

"I'm not afraid of the Tories," replied Bill; "as a party they are contemptible against the League."

"Single handed, they are, I dare say," agreed

Mr. Smoothington; "but if the League interest is split, a very small party will defeat it."

"True!" observed Mr. Bowker, seeing how the thing would cut. "Well, then, the best thing will be for the Marquis of Bray to retire," added he; "can be no difficulty about that, you know."

"Except that the Marquis's interest has always been paramount in the county."

"Time there was a change, then," observed Bill. "The Reform Bill ought to have put all that right."

"I'm afraid I could hardly advise the Marquis to retire," observed Mr. Smoothington, after a long pause.

"You can hardly expect me to do it, I think, after all the expense I've incurred," replied Mr. Bowker.

"Perhaps we could accommodate matters," suggested Mr. Smoothington, helping himself to the proffered bottles. "The Duke has great interest in the neighbouring borough of Swillington, and a dissolution can't be far off; his interest there might return you comfortably for a long session, without trouble or expense.

Mr. Bowker sat silent, apparently considering the matter.

“County representations are very troublesome,” observed Mr. Smoothington; “people never done asking — schools, churches, hospitals, infirmaries, races, plays, farces, devilments of all sorts — no gratitude either. At Swillington there’s nothing but a dinner, and a guinea a-head to the voters; five hundred pounds would do it.”

“I should still lose all the expenses I have been at here,” observed Mr. Bowker.

“That could be accommodated too,” replied Mr. Smoothington.

“Consider the trouble though,” bristled Mr. Bowker. “What can compensate me for my trouble, mental anxiety, and so on?”

“True!” assented Mr Smoothington, unable to price it.

“Separation from family,” urged Mr. Bowker.

“Very true!” replied Mr. Smoothington.

“Leaving one’s own comfortable home, for a filthy frowsy inn, where they haven’t even the common decency, I may almost say, necessary of life, ice for champagne.”

“This, I fear, is beyond the reach of our control,” observed Mr. Smoothington, rolling his hands over and over.

“Money can’t put that right,” said Mr. Bowker.

Mr. Smoothington shook his head. “It’s an

unfortunate thing that the Marquis and you should have come in collision," said he.

"It is," said Mr. Bowker, "*most* unfortunate."

"The Duke is a most amiable person," observed Mr. Smoothington. "So is the Duchess; you'd like them if you knew them."

"Faith, I'm not a great man for the nobility," observed Mr. Bowker; "Am very much of an old friend of mine's way of thinking; who says that they first try to make towels, and then dishclouts, of one."

"The Duke of Donkeyton doesn't," replied Mr. Smoothington; "he's always the same."

"Good fellow, is he?" asked Mr. Bowker.

"*Very*," replied Mr. Smoothington.

"And the Marquis, what's he like?" asked Mr. Bowker.

"Very fine young man," said Mr. Smoothington.

"Indeed," mused Mr. Bowker.

"Perhaps you'd go over with me and talk to the Marquis?" observed Mr. Smoothington after a pause.

"Why, I don't know," replied Mr. Bowker; "I dare say we can do all he could."

"No doubt," rejoined Mr. Smoothington; "no doubt. The Duke will ratify whatever I do."

"You are his factotum, I suppose," observed Mr. Bowker.

"The Duke does nothing without consulting me," replied Mr. Smoothington with a self-complacent smile.

"It's an awkward business," mused Mr. Bowker; "commenced my canvass—extremely popular—great disappointment—enormous expense."

"The expense should be *no* object," replied Mr. Smoothington, "if you could only get over the rest."

Mr. Bowker meditated.

"Nay, I don't want to drive a hard bargain," at length said he, with an air of indifference.

"It's only *right* you should not be out of pocket," replied Mr. Smoothington; "indeed, I should consider it my duty to see that you were not, the mistake having originated partly with myself."

"Well," said Mr. Bowker, again helping himself, and passing the bottle, "your proposition appears reasonable—fair, I may say."

"I'm glad you think so," replied Mr. Smoothington; "there is only one way of dealing with gentlemen like you."

“ Let me see,” said Mr. Bowker, rubbing his hands ; “ it is that the Duke returns me for Swillington at the general election, and pays my present expenses—that’s to say, up to to-night ? ”

“ I’ll agree to that on behalf of his Grace,” replied Mr. Smoothington, bowing and helping himself.

“ It may save trouble,” said Bill, “ if I take a sum down. There are expenses in town as well as here,” added he.

“ As you please,” replied Mr. Smoothington. “ What shall we say ? ”

“ Put it in at your own figure,” said Bill, with a shrug of the shoulders, and an air of indifference. “ A thousand ! *say*, a thousand ! ” added he.

This was a good deal more than Mr. Smoothington expected ; but coming from a man with three pineries, and the best venison going, he thought it better to close than to haggle ; especially as he was dealing for a Duke.

“ Agreed,” said Mr. Smoothington.

“ Help yourself,” said Mr. Bowker, again passing the bottle, “ and drink success to the Marquis of Bray.” Mr. Bowker drank it in a bumper.

“ His lordship will be much flattered when I

tell him the compliment you've paid him," said Mr. Smoothington, filling his glass and doing the same.

"You may as well give me a cheque for the money to-night," said Bill, "and let me get out of this noisy place before they resume their racket in the morning."

"With all my heart," replied Mr. Smoothington, thinking he had better clench the bargain and get an agreement of resignation at the same time. Pens, ink, and paper being then produced, Mr. Smoothington filled up a cheque for the required sum, and took a memorandum of the agreement from Mr. Bowker, who got a duplicate signed by Mr. S., on behalf of the Duke of Donkeyton.

Exulting in his diplomacy, Mr. Smoothington shortly after backed out of the room, not, however, without receiving a pressing invitation from Bill to visit him at Whetstone Park.

With a somewhat swimming head, Mr. Smoothington descended the Inn stairs; and, after ordering an express to come to his house, as soon as he could get ready, he sat down at his desk at home, to write his letter to Donkeyton Castle just as the market-place clock chimed midnight.

CHAPTER XLIII.

“ Thus far our fortune keeps an onward course,
And we are grac’d with wreaths of victory.”

SHAKSPEARE.

MR. SMOOTHINGTON felt as if he had performed the greatest feat in his life. Single-handed, he had saved the county from a contest. Thus he announced the victory to the Duke:—

“ MY LORD DUKE,

“ I have the honour to acquaint you that, after a long interview with Mr. Bowker, I have at length succeeded in inducing that gentleman to retire from the contest.

“ I found him most genteel, affable, and urbane; but his ambition of obtaining a seat in parliament, and the great expense he had already incurred, together with the popularity he had acquired, made him reluctant to lose his hold upon the electors. After, however, pressing upon

his consideration, the similarity of the Marquis of Bray's (amended) political opinions and his own, together with your lordship's old family claims upon the county, Mr. Bowker, in the most gentlemanly manner, consented to retire, on the understanding that your Lordship affords him your interest at Swillington, at the general election, and pays the costs of the day. These, to save trouble, and for the sake of round numbers, he has put down at one thousand pounds, be the same more or less, for which sum I have given him a cheque on my banker, and I now most sincerely trust that the Marquis of Bray may succeed to the seat of his ancestors without further let, suit, trouble, molestation, hindrance, or delay.

"I have the honour to subscribe myself, my Lord Duke, with the greatest respect, your much obliged and very humble servant,

"PETER SMOOTHINGTON.

"Sellborough.

"To the most noble,
the Duke of Donkeyton,
Donkeyton Castle."

*"Immediate. By express. One o'clock
in the morning."*

His lordship had retired to rest at his usual hour, hoping to drown in sleep the painful subject that had occupied the Duchess's and his attention since Mr. Smoothington's departure, having first given orders to Binks to send up any letter that might arrive the moment it came. Sleep, however, was banished from his eyelids. The horrible phantom of a monstrous bloated citizen passed continually before his vision, and "BOWKER FOR EVER" sounded in his ears.

Sometimes, when just dropping off asleep, he fancied himself in the clutches of the fish-fag, and his efforts to disengage himself awoke him. Twelve, one, two, three, and four o'clock, he successively heard strike, and he began to long for daylight. Towards five, just as he really was likely to succeed, a little, gentle tapping, that could hardly awake a mouse, sounded through the thick oak door, and, in obedience to the Duke's "*come in!*" Jeanette, the Duchess's pretty little French maid, tripped noiselessly into the room, and, by the aid of the rush-light, deposited Mr. Smoothington's letter on the table at the bed side. The Duke was presently at it.

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"Bravo!" exclaimed the Duke, as he read the

first sentence, announcing that Mr. Smoothington had succeeded in inducing Mr. Bowker to retire.

"That's a good job," said he, "however."

He then proceeded with the rest of the letter.

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"Very good!" said he, "very good! well done, indeed—monstrously well done," said he, reading the borough arrangement and the thousand pounds. "Smoothington's managed that well." So saying the Duke lit the wax-candles in the dressing-room, and forthwith proceeded to exercise his gratitude by the following letter to his conjurer:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I beg to return you the Duchess of Donkeyton's and my very best thanks for the admirable arrangement you have effected with Mr. Bowker. We ratify it in every respect. I enclose an order on Moneyboys and Co. for fifteen hundred pounds, begging your acceptance of the five hundred. With respect, sir, I have the pleasure to be,

"Your obedient servant,

"DONKEYTON."

Having directed and sealed this, the Duke

rang his bell, and, after desiring that the messenger might have it, he turned into bed, and slept like a top until twelve.

This being the second time within the four-and-twenty hours that the bow-legged postboy and rat-tailed roan had been at the castle, the former thought it necessary to refresh his inward man very considerably; and he drank so much strong ale, that he was greatly indebted to his horse's discernment for getting him home. He was stupidly drunk. Daylight, fresh air, and the ride, made him staring drunk. He looked like an owl. Great placards met his eyes at intervals as he went, but all he could settle respecting them was, that they were not "signs." Gradually his vision improved, and his mind began toying with the letters. The placards were all alike, and the frequency of their appearance so far familiarized him with them, that he blurted out on tumbling from his horse in the inn yard, "Great fat Duke o' Donkeyton total repealer."

After-comers saw more clearly. It was market-day at Sellborough, and consternation was depicted on the farmers' faces as they entered the town, and the ominous placard—

“A GREAT FACT !

THE

DUKE OF DONKEYTON

A TOTAL

REPEALER,”

met their gaze at every turn. The League again were prodigal of paper.

The farmers stared, and asked each other what it could mean. It must be a hoax—it could not be true. The Duke, the bulk of whose income was derived from land, would never cut his own throat. One thought one thing, another another.

Mr. Smoothington, like the Duke, indulged in a good snooze after his over-night exertions ; and the morning was far spent ere, in the progress of his shave, his eye met one of the enormous placards on the opposite wall—

“GREAT FACT !

THE DUKE OF DONKEYTON

A

TOTAL REPEALER !”

Smoothington was horror struck. He saw the error he had committed. He stared and

stared, and could not finish his shave ; knocks sounded at his door, and rings pealed at his bell ; and when he got down stairs, he found the passage and clerks' office crammed full of farmers. Just then the bill-sticker went by with his paste can and pole, putting up the Marquis's amended address. Boys were distributing it in hand-bills about the streets, and shouts of " Bowker for ever ! Big loaf Bowker !" still sounded in the streets, as " open houses " closed their accounts, by turning the toppers out of doors. Mr. Bowker had taken his departure soon after the bank opened, leaving the English and American loaves dangling from the inn balcony. The drunken, frantic violence of the debauched town populace contrasted with the sober staidness of the farmers.

Some people may fancy farmers simple fools ; but where self-interest is concerned, they are quite as sharp as their neighbours. To be sure, they do sometimes make absurd propositions to their landlords, but that is more a sign of their thinking their landlords fools than of their being so themselves. Did any landlord ever know a tenant make a proposition that would tell against himself ?

Mr. Smoothington could not humbug the farmers. He could not make them believe that the Marquis's fresh address had nothing to do with the League placard, or with Mr. Bowker's departure. Moreover, being plain-spoken men, they frankly told him so.

The market commenced, and the effect these proceedings had upon prices will be best understood by the following extract from that excellent agricultural paper, *The Mark Lane Express*.

“SELLBOROUGH.—Our market was well supplied with wheat, for which the farmers expected high prices; but owing to the unexpected announcement of the Duke of Donkeyton's accession to the Corn-Law League (proclaimed by large placards throughout the town before the market commenced), a panic ensued, and it could hardly be got off at any price. Barley, oats, beans, and peas shared a similar depression.”

It so happened that this was the monthly meeting day of the farmers' club, when they dined together, smoked, drank, and discussed farming topics. There was a large muster of the body towards two o'clock, at the sign of the Bull's Head. The subject fixed for discussion—“How much more potent lime was when supplied by

the landlord than when found by the tenant?"—was forgotten altogether in the excitement caused by the announcement of the morning. Mr. Heavytail was chairman of the day, and entered the room in a high state of perturbation, caused by the untoward depression of prices. His voice was heard up stairs before he had well got into the passage below.

“AR NIVER KNEW SUCH A THING IN ALL MY LIFE! FOLKS ARE ALL GONE MAD TOGETHER! HAV’NT TAKEN AS MUCH MONEY AS WILL PAY MY GATES!”

Johnny Wopstraw came in, great-coated and over-all’d, as usual, with his canvas sample bag in his hand, declaring—“upon the who-o-le he was ruined!”

Haycock, of Hazeldean; Farbridge, of Cow Gate; Snewkes, of Heckley Heath; Brick, of Dobble Heath; Brick, of Rushley; Clotworthy, of Woolley Grange; Dick Grumbleton, of Hawkstone, and some twenty others, all declared the same thing. Murmur rose above murmur, till the joints got upon the table, and the meat stopped their mouths. Heavytail was hid behind a baron of beef. The clatter of knives, forks, and plates; the callings for ale and beer, and the

thanking each other for further supplies, stopped the grumbling for a time.

The cloth being drawn, and the favourite beverage of each man placed before him—wine to the wine drinker, spirit and water to the humbler—Mr. Heavytail rose and gave the “Health of the Queen” in a tone that plainly told how depressed he was. Her Majesty’s health having been drunk, Heavytail presently rose again, and in his usual stentorian voice, exclaimed—

“UPON MY WORD, GENTLEMEN, I’M SO TROUBLED IN MY MIND, THAT I CANNOT GO ON AS I SHOULD. I THINK I NEVER HEARD SUCH A THING IN MY LIFE, AS FOR A NOBLEMAN LIKE THE DUKE OF DONKEYTON —A MAN THAT HALF THE COUNTY BELONGS TO—TO GO AND JOIN A DIRTY RUB-BISHIN’ RADICAL SET OF DIVILS, WITH SCARCE A COAT TO THEIR BACKS” (*applause*). “OH DEAR, I’M BAD,” continued Heavytail, panting for breath, and pressing his stomach with his left hand. “I THINK,” continued he, in his roar—“GENTLEMEN, I’D BETTER GET THROUGH MY TOASTS, AND THEN WE CAN TALK THE MATTER QUIETLY OVER; SO I’LL PROPOSE THE HEALTHS OF ‘PRINCE ALBERT,’ ‘ALBERT, PRINCE OF WALES,’ ‘ALL THE YOUNG UN’S,’ ‘THE QUEEN

DOWAGER,' 'AND ALL THE REST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY;'" with which comprehensive toast Mark sat down.

Farmers then began laying their heads together in knots of threes and fours. Some thought one thing, some another. All agreed they could not compete with foreigners.

" I'VE PUT TWENTY THOUSAND DRAININ' TILES UNDERGROUND THIS YEAR," observed the Chairman; " AND WILL ANY MAN TELL ME THAT I'M NOT CONSARNED IN THE QUESTION? "

" Upon the who-o-o-le," observed Johnny Wopstraw, " I think the farmers are the most so."

" And the labourers!" rejoined Mr. Clotworthy, of Woeley Grange. " I employ, upon an average, eight men upon every hundred acres of arable land, winter and summer; and I should like to know how many I should want if it was all in grass."

" WE MUST HAVE A MAN THAT'LL PROTECT US!" observed Mr. Heavytail, from the presidential chair.

" *So we will! so we will!*" exclaimed several; and thereupon glasses began to dance, and spoons to clatter on the table, with the applause the observation called forth.

More wine, more spirit, and pipes, were then called for.

"WE MUST SHOW FIGHT, OR THEY'LL FLOOR us!" observed the oracle again.

"We will! we will!" exclaimed several, amid renewed applause.

"Such a man as Squire Wheatfield, or Mr. Hay of the Mount," observed Mr. Brick of Rushley.

"Squire Wheatfield don't farm," replied Mr. Farbridge.

"Squire Hay don't either," said Mr. Brick of Dobble Heath.

Several other Squires were then talked of: Haycock named his landlord; but the proposition did not meet with much success. Snewkes named another, Brick a third, and Dick Grumbleton objected to them all.

"I think upon the who-o-o-le we must have Mr. Jorrocks," observed Johnny Wopstraw.

Great applause followed the observation.

Mr. Jorrocks next day having got up very early to write an ode to his Bull, was interrupted by the constable coming to say that two men had quarrelled and fought, and each wanted to lay a charge of assault against the other.

Quarrelled, and fought! what about?" exclaimed our Squire, darting an angry glance at the intruder.

"About!—about—*nothing*, I think," said the constable.

"*Humph!*" grunted Mr. Jorrocks. "They'll both be in the wrong, I s'pose?" added he.

"Indeed, I don't know, sir," replied the constable; "they both think themselves in the right at the present time."

"That's jest wot *convinces* me they are both in the wrong," rejoined the justice, thinking how he could get rid of the case without bothering himself.

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"Tell 'em," said he, after a pause, "to go to the public 'ouse, the Jorrocks' Harms, and drink a pint o' hale together, and try to make it hup; and if they can't, to come back here, and I'll commit 'em both."

"Yes, sir," said the constable.

"Send 'em to the sessions," added Mr. Jorrocks.

"Yes, sir," replied the constable.

"And bind you over to *persecute*," continued Mr. Jorrocks.

"Yes, sir," replied the constable, with a duck of the head.

"Troublesome dogs," said Mr. Jorrocks to himself; "they're *always fightin'.*"

"Please, sir, here's Mr. Good'heart wants to speak to you," said Benjamin, entering the sanctum with his usual hang-gallows look, just as Mr. Jorrocks was resuming his poem.

"Mr. Good'heart, Binjimin!" exclaimed the Squire, starting up. "I've not seen Mr. Good'heart these six weeks. Show him in."

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Presently the venerable old man made his appearance, drooping with the weight of years.

"Vell, Mr. Good'heart, and 'ow are you?" asked Mr. Jorrocks, in a cheerful tone.

"Thanke ye, sir, I'm middlin'—canna complain—not so strong as I was, p'rhaps—am rather gettin' on in years you see—I'm turned of seventy-two."

"Well, but that's nothin'," observed Mr. Jorrocks.

"Why, no, sir; it's not, sir," replied Goodheart, "but we are nabbut a short-lived family, you see. My father was cut off in the prime of life, at eighty-two."

“ Poor young man ! ” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks ; adding, “ come, sit down, and tell us all about it. You’ll be wantin’ some fifth o’ George the Fourth I presume.”

“ No, sir,” replied Willey, not knowing what the Squire meant.

“ Your rent raised, then, p’raps,” suggested Mr. Jorrocks, acting on Pigg’s recommendation of anticipating complaints.

“ No ’deed do I not, sir,” replied Goodheart with emphasis ; “ us farmers, I think, will all be ruined.”

“ Vot’s ’appen’d now?” asked Mr. Jorrocks. “ They harn’t been a firin’ of your stack-yard, ’ave they ? ”

“ Far worse than that ! far worse than that ! ” exclaimed Goodheart. “ I’ve been readin’ in the Grampound Gun of a thing they call a League, for takin’ the duty off French corn.”

“ Ah ! ” said Mr. Jorrocks, smiling, “ you’ve read up to *that*, ’ave you ? ” recollecting Willey was always a year or two in arrear with news.

“ To think,” continued Willey, “ of my ever livin’ to see such a thing as the French and English on such terms. I, that hate the French, so that I would never eat a French roll or grow

French beans in my garden. Why, sir, I was a volunteer in the times of Bonaparte."

"So was I!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks. "So was I!" repeated he, "in the City Light 'Oss."

"But you musn't *allow* it," observed Willy, thinking a magistrate could do anything. "You must *speak* about it," added he. "What's the use of your being a magistrate if you can't stop such work as that?"

"I fear it vont come within the fifth of George the Fourth," observed Mr. Jorrocks, aloud to himself.

"Please, sir," said Benjamin, coming in again, "here's Mr. 'Eavytail, and some more gentlemen want to see you."

"*More* gen'lmen!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks. "It must be the ball they want to see! Confound, that hanimal's werry expensive. Cost me a hocean o' sherry. Shall have to get some Masala."

"Tell Mr. 'Tail and the gen'lmen," said Mr. Jorrocks to Benjamin, "that I'm partickler engaged—inwestigatin' a dreadful bugglary—but the Markis 'll be 'appy to see them, and you go and show him—or get Pigg, if you're afeard he'll toss you again."

"Yes, sir," said Benjamin, taking his departure.

"Please, sir, Mr. Wopstraw says upon the who-o-ole, it's *you* they want to see," said Benjamin, entering the room and imitating Wopstraw.

"Cuss the chaps," muttered Mr. Jorrocks; adding, "I never 'ave a moment to myself. Vell, send them in," said he in disgust.

* * * * *

"YOUR SARVANT, SIR," roared Heavytail, entering the room, followed by Wopstraw, the Bricks, Snewkes, Grumbleton, Haycock, Clotworthy, and a whole host more.

"Good mornin', gentlemen," said Mr. Jorrocks, astonished at the number; "I'm afeard you'll hardly get chairs," added he, looking round the room.

"NEVER MIND, SIR, WE CAN STAND," roared Heavytail. "WE'VE COME TO SEE YOU ABOUT THIS PARLIAMENT BUSINESS."

"Humph," grunted Mr. Jorrocks; "and who are you for?" asked he.

"You!" roared Heavytail.

"ME!" exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks. "Ah, I twig," added he. "You mean, you're willin' to

wote as I wote. All right and proper—much obleged to you.”

“No, sir,” observed Wopstraw. “We think, upon the who-o-ole, we’ll have you for parliament man!”

“Me for parliament man!” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks; “’ow can that be? The Markis is to be parliament man.”

“HE WON’T DO FOR US FARMERS!” roared Heavytail, producing the Marquis’s amended address.

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“I twig,” said Mr. Jorrocks. “Goes against the corn laws.”

“Upon the who-o-ole, we must have a man that’s for them,” observed Wopstraw.

“THERE’S BEEN MEETINGS OF THE FARMERS ALL OVER THE COUNTY,” roared Heavytail, “AND THEY’RE ALL FOR YOU.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, “that’s werry purllite on ’em; and who’ll pay the shot? Parlument’s an expensive shop.”

“WE’LL ALL POLL AT OUR OWN EXPENSE,” roared Heavytail.

“Ay, but the pollin’ arn’t the great damage. Livin’ in London; givin’ of dinners; bespeakin’

of plays in the country, and I don't know what else."

"Upon the who-o-ole we think, as you have a house up in London, you can do it cheaper nor anybody else."

"Vell," said Mr. Jorrocks, "but it's an enormous sacrifice you are a callin' on me to make. Consider 'ow 'appy I am in the country ; tendin' my flocks and 'erds ; guanoin' and nitrate o' soberin' my land, and all that sort of thing."

"BUT THERE'S A DEAL OF HONOUR IN IT," roared Heavytail.

"No doubt," replied Mr. Jorrocks ; "no doubt," repeated he ; "and so there should—and so there should ; but honour, you know, may be bought too dear."

"Well, but it's no use argufyin' the matter," observed one of the Bricks ; "for you we've fixed upon, and you we'll have."

"Vell, but," observed Mr. Jorrocks, after a pause, "you've taken me all aback—you've taken me all aback—thought you'd come for to see my noble bale—there's a deal to consider—there's a deal to consider—Mrs. Jorrocks to consult—Mrs. Jorrocks to consult—consult Mrs. Jorrocks."

"THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE," roared Heavytail,

“LET THE MARQUIS GET A START, AND IT’S ALL OVER WITH US. YOU MAY GIVE YOUR LAND AWAY, IF YOU CAN GET ANY BODY TO TAKE IT, THAT’S TO SAY.”

“Oh, dear,” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, “that would be a bad go—that would be a bad go. Get little enough as it is. Howsomever, you must give me a leetle time to consider; meanwhile, take a walk and see the bale, and Mrs. J.’s bantams, and all that sort o’ thing. Then come back, and have a leetle sherry and seed cake, or somethin’ of that sort, and we will talk the matter quietly over, for I declare you’ve taken me so by surprise, I don’t know vether I’m a standin’ on my ’ead or my ’eels.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

“Bring me no more reports.”

PEOPLE in castles hear differently to the world at large. The real truth seldom penetrates castles.

When the whole county was in a state of ferment at the appearance of the League's “great fact” bill, and the Marquis of Bray's address, the Duke, ensconced within his park walls, fancied all was over and quiet, and that the Marquis had nothing to do but walk quietly in.

On the day following the issuing of the bill, his Grace took a saunter up to the model farm to give directions for some new experiments on nature, and hear the result of some recently made. Mr. Jobson had notice of his coming, and the whole establishment were full fig to receive him. Mrs. Jobson had her lavender-coloured silk curtains unbagged, and the drawing-room arranged

in apple-pie order, in case his Grace should condescend to take a little refreshment.

The important experiments being discussed, the Duke, still full of his admirable diplomacy in putting so little into the Marquis's address as to enable him to get rid of Mr. Bowker by a little enlargement of it, could not resist the temptation of saying a few words relative to the late threatened contest.

"All quiet again now, I suppose," observed he to Mr. Jobson, "since *that* Mr. Bowker took himself off?"

"I hope so, your Grace," hesitated Mr. Jobson.

"What! is there any doubt about it?" exclaimed the Duke. "Is there any doubt about it?" repeated he, alarmed at Jobson's manner.

"O, no, your Grace," replied Mr. Jobson; "at least, I dare say not; what we hear are most likely lies—in fact, it does not do to believe everything one hears.

"But are there any reports current?" asked the Duke.

"Why, there *are* reports, certainly," stammered Mr. Jobson, finding the Duke was ignorant of the feeling of the county; "but I can't trace them to any good authority."

"What are they?" asked the Duke impatiently.
"What are they?" repeated he.

"Why, I've heard that the farmers threaten an opposition," faltered Mr. Jobson.

"Farmers threaten an opposition!" exclaimed the Duke. "That's something new. That'll not do, I think," added he; "not against the Marquis of Bray, at least."

"That's what I think," observed Mr. Jobson.

"Ridiculous!" observed the Duke; "monstrous ridiculous. We are popular, I suppose? monstrous popular?"

"*Extremely* popular," replied Mr. Jobson; adding, "it would be very extraordinary if your Grace was not so."

"Well, I think so too," replied the Duke. "I think so too. But tell me, who do they talk of? Who do they talk of?"

"I have heard two or three named," replied Mr. Jobson. "Captain Bluster, I think, seems the most likely man."

"Bluster! Captain Bluster!" exclaimed the Duke. "Why, that's the man with the whiskers on his chin—the man I made a magistrate of."

"You did, your Grace," replied Mr. Jobson."

"Impudent dog!" said the Duke to himself.

"I gave him a bull, too !" added the Duke, after a pause.

"No, your Grace—Mr. Jorrocks was the gentleman your Grace gave the bull to," observed Mr. Jobson.

"True," replied the Duke, "true—Jorrocks is the man I gave the bull to—Jorrocks is a good fellow—Jorrocks is a gentleman—Bluster's a blackguard—Bluster's a blackguard. Impudent fellow—monstrous impudent fellow."

"Do you really think there's any truth in it?" asked the Duke, after a pause.

"Upon my word, I don't know, your Grace," replied Mr. Jobson, anxious to soothe, but hardly daring to deceive. "Upon my word I don't know," repeated Jobson. "We live in queer times, your Grace."

"We do, indeed," replied the Duke—"we do, indeed; that cursed Reform Bill turned the world upside down — always told Russell and Durham, and all of them, that they were going far too far. Well, it can't be helped," added he, resignedly, after a pause—"it can't be helped. If they prefer Bluster to Jeems, they must have Bluster." So saying, the Duke turned from the model farm in disgust, and, letting himself into

the park through the little green door in the wall, wandered musingly homeward, without doing Mrs. Jobson the honour of calling on her.

He had not been long gone ere news arrived at the model farm that Mr. Jorrocks had acceded to the wishes of the farmers, and was about to declare himself for the county.

Anxious that the Duke should have the earliest information he could give him on so vital a point, Mr. Jobson ordered his hack to be saddled, and followed the line his Grace had taken across the park.

He soon overtook him.

“Your Grace!” exclaimed Mr. Jobson, reining up his thorough-bred, and taking off his hat. “Your Grace,” repeated he, “I’ve just heard that Mr. Jorrocks is the gentleman who’s coming forward for the county!”

“Mr. Jorrocks!” exclaimed the Duke; “Mr. Jorrocks! That’s the man with the whiskers on his chin.”

“No, your Grace,” replied Jobson; “the man with the bull: Bluster’s the man with the whiskers on his chin.”

“Ah, true!” exclaimed the Duke, “the man I

gave the bull to. The man I made a magistrate of, eh?"

"Your Grace made magistrates of them both," observed Jobson.

"So I did," replied the Duke; "so I did. And do you say that that Jorrocks, the man I gave the bull to—the man who can't speak English, is going to have the effrontery to oppose the Marquis of Bray?"

"So they say, your Grace. He's the man they call the sleeping partner in Mother H.'s," added Jobson, with a grin—Jobson having a cross of the cockney himself.

"Audacious dog!" exclaimed the Duke. "Then it's Jorrocks, not Bluster?" added his Grace, conning the matter over.

"*Jorrocks*, not Bluster," replied Jobson, with an emphasis on Jorrocks.

"Ah, I thought it wouldn't be Bluster," observed the Duke. "Bluster's a good fellow. Bluster's a gentleman. Jorrocks is a black-guard! Jorrocks is a blackguard!"

Jobson stood silent by the side of his hack.

* * * * *

"It's a nuisance," said the Duke, after a long pause; "monstrous nuisance, may involve Jeems in a nasty beery canvass."

"It may so, your Grace," replied Mr. Jobson.

"Couldn't we get rid of this man Jorrocks somehow?" suggested the Duke; "he'll most likely have his price," added he, thinking of Bowker and the thousand.

"We might try him," replied Mr. Jobson.

"You might ride over and sound him," said the Duke. "Put it to his good feeling not to annoy parties who have been so civil and condescending to him. Talk about the bull I gave him, the dinners he's had here, the honours I've conferred upon him. Tell him I hope he'll not give me cause to suppose I have fostered a viper in my bosom."

"I will so, your Grace," replied Mr. Jobson.

"I'll do all I can."

"The sooner the better," observed the Duke.

"I'll go directly," said Mr. Jobson, preparing to mount.

"Tell him he's not fit for anything of the sort," said the Duke, as Jobson mounted.

"I will, your Grace," replied the obsequious Jobson.

"You might try him with a deputy lieutenantcy, if you can't get rid of him without," added the Duke, as Mr. Jobson bowed and rode away.

CHAPTER XLV.

“O, monstrous beast! how like a swine he lies!”

Tired with the exertions of a long day's canvass, Mr. Jorrocks had seated himself in an easy chair, to enjoy a bottle of strong military port, of recent emancipation from the wood, when Mr. Jobson's noisy peal at the bell threw him into alarm.

“Cuss them, 'ere's some more on 'em a comin'!” exclaimed he, bolting upright, half resolved not to be at home.

“Please sir, here's Mr. Jobson, sir,” said Benjamin, opening the door.

“Mr. Jobson!” repeated Mr. Jorrocks, “Mr. Jobson! That's the Duke of Donkeyton's farm gentleman; show him in, and bring candles—*wax* un's you know, Binjamin;” adding, with a shake of the head, “expensive work this electioneerin'.”

Mr. Jobson came bowing and groping his way into the dining-room.

“’Ow are’ you, my frind?” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, rising and greeting him with a shake of the hand. “Allow me to solicit the honour of your wote and interest?” added he, coming out with the usual form.

“I’m afraid I can hardly give that,” replied Mr. Jobson, taking a proffered chair; “I’m afraid I can hardly do that—not but that I’m quite independent, do exactly as I like; only, from what I read of your address, I fear your opinions and mine don’t exactly tally.”

“*Humph*,” grunted Mr. Jorrocks. “Independence is a werry fine thing to talk about; but there’s precious little on’t in the world. The only real independence I knows on, is the independence of furnish’d lodgin’s, thick shoes, and a shootin’ jacket.”

Benjamin then entered with the candles.

“Take a glass o’ wine,” said Mr. Jorrocks, helping himself, and pushing the bottle to Jobson. “There’s *sher* i’ the sideboard, if you prefer it, to blackstrap.”

Mr. Jobson preferred claret, if there was any out.

“ Claret, I never keeps,” replied Mr. Jorrocks. “ Can soon make you some, though,” added he, “ with water and winegar, and a little drop o’ port.”

Mr. Jobson then took port.

Mr. Jorrocks drank Jobson’s health, and Jobson drank Mr. Jorrocks’s.

“ Fine stuff that,” said Mr. Jorrocks, smacking his lips, after the glass of hot, sweet, fruity wine. “ And ’ow goes on the farm ?” asked he. “ ’Ope Mrs. Job and all the little Job’s are well ?”

“ Quite well, I’m much obliged to you,” replied Jobson.

“ We’ll drink Mrs. Jobson’s ’ealth,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, helping himself and passing the bottle.

Mr. Jobson presently returned the compliment, and proposed the health of Mrs. Jorrocks.

“ We’ll now drink the ’ealth of all the *leetle* Jobsons,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, in due time.

Mr. Jorrocks afterwards proposed the health of “ The Queen and her stag ’ounds,” and then of “ Prince Albert and his beagles.” The glasses being large, another or two a-piece finished the bottle.

"*Port !*" said Mr. Jorrocks, as Benjamin answered the bell.

* * * * *

" I've now got a toast to propose," observed Mr. Jorrocks, as the wine came, and he held the decanter up to the candle, to see that Benjamin had not done him out of any. " I've now got a toast to propose," said he, that I'm sure will find its way to your 'eart, without any soft sauder from me"—(" Hear, hear," exclaimed Mr. Jobson). " It is," continued Mr. Jorrocks, " the 'ealth of one both near and dear to me—one wot occupies, wakin' and sleepin', an unkimmon portion o' my thoughts. Oh !" continued he, aloud to himself, " the greatest pang wot I shall suffer in goin' hup to Parliament will be the separation from that henergetic, that hamiable quad—I'll give you," said he, turning to Jobson, " the 'ealth o' my ball in a bamper !"

" Nay, fill hup !" said Mr. Jorrocks, as Jobson stopped half way up his glass. " A bamper to the ball, whatever you do !"

Mr. Jobson then filled, and drank as desired.

" He's a fine animal," observed Jobson, as, with a wry face, he set down his glass.

" He is that !" replied Mr. Jorrocks, " a *real* fine animal."

"The Duke wouldn't have given him to any body but yourself," observed Jobson.

"Vot, he was particklar fond on him, was he?" asked Mr. Jorrocks.

"No; but he had such a high opinion of you," observed Mr. Jobson.

"Don't see why he should," muttered Mr. Jorrocks, aloud to himself, adding—"We'll drink his Greece's 'ealth in a bampers," filling his glass and passing the bottle.

"Nay! no sky lights!" exclaimed he, as Jobson again shirked filling. Jobson then did as desired.

"The mention o' that hinterestin, that hami-able hanimal," observed Mr. Jorrocks, as Jobson again accomplished his measure with a shrug, "reminds me of a most hami-able young gen'lmen after whom he is' called; one that I'm sure will emulate his ball lordship in his honorable career, and make their common name transcendantly victorious. I'll give you the 'Ealth of the Mar-kis o' Bray,'" added Mr. Jorrocks, again filling a bumper.

"I suppose you mean transcendantly victorious in the coming contest," observed Mr. Jobson, who did not altogether approve of the Marquis's

career among the ladies ; particularly about home.

“ I means, celebrated—distinguished,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, tapping the decanter to draw Jobson’s attention to his duties ; adding, “ come, drink your young master in a bumper.”

Jobson did not like this description of their relative positions ; bnt fearing Mr. Jorrocks might say something more offensive, coolly submitted.

“ Nay ; no ’eel-taps !” exclaimed our friend, seeing Mr. Jobson preparing to fill upon a half-emptied glass, adding—

“ This is liberty all, do as you will,

Fill wot you please, but drink wot you fill.”

“ But you won’t let me do as I will,” observed Jobson tartly ; “ you will make me fill bumpers.”

“ Bumpers in course to toasts,” observed Mr. Jorrocks ; “ arter we’ve done drinkin’ toasts we shall come to the sentiments, and then you can do as you like you know.”

“ I wish we were at them,” thought the refined, claret drinking Jobson.

“ In considerin’ the toasts we’ve already drank,” observed Mr. Jorrocks after a pause,

during which Jobson had been arranging a plan of attack in his own mind. "I'm somewhat—that's to say, a good deal flabbergastered to find that we've altogether omitted the name of a lady wot ranks werry 'igh in the peerage of the kingdom, and the estimation of the county (hiccup). I'm cock sure I need say nothin' to recommend that illustrious (hiccup) lady to your consideration, because livin' under the family you'll know a deal more about her nor me; but I should be werry (hiccup) sorry to have it (hiccup) said, that one of her servants and I should 'ave passed a convivial evenin' together, without so much as drinkin' of her 'ealth; I therefore beg to propose the 'Ealth of the (hiccup) Duchess of Donkeyton in a bamper.'"

"Oh dear," groaned Jobson, with throbbing temples, as he shirked the filling.

"Now, we'll jest 'ave another bottle," observed Mr. Jorrocks, turning the bottom of that one into Jobson's glass, so as to make him up a bumper, "and then we can drink good evenin' in a glass of (hiccup) brandy and water or two," added he, ringing the bell again.

"I'm afraid that will be trespassing too largely on your time," observed Mr. Jobson.

“Time’s of no importance with me,” hiccuped Mr. Jorrocks with an air of indifference.

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mr. Jobson; “then you’ve given up the idea of standing for the county?”

“I did not say that,” replied Mr. Jorrocks. “I means night-time’s of no value: can’t canvass day and night too.”

“I was in hopes, from the handsome manner in which you have spoken of our people,” observed Jobson, “that you had given up the idea of opposing our friend the Marquis.”

“No doubt,” hiccuped Mr. Jorrocks; “speak well o’ them wot uses one well.”

“Undoubtedly,” said Mr. Jobson; “and *use* them well too I hope.”

“To be sure,” hiccuped Mr. Jorrocks.

“Then you don’t mean to oppose the Marquis?” asked Mr. Jobson.

“Not if the Markis ’ill stand up for us poor farmers,” replied Mr. Jorrocks, helping himself out of the fresh bottle, and passing it to Jobson, saying—“Let us drink prosperity to hagricultur’,” adding—“it’s like the hair we breathe—if we ’ave it not we die.”

Mr. Jobson took a little.

“Nay, a bamper to that at all ewents,” hiccupped Mr. Jorrocks.

“I thought you said I might fill as I liked to sentiments,” observed Jobson.

“No doubt,” hiccupped Mr. Jorrocks; “but that arnt no sintiment; it’s a *toast*—nothin’ but a toast; so take a bamper. Sintiments,” hiccupped he, “have reference to the ladies, sich as sweethearts and wives, honest men and bonnie lasses, the fair o’ Middlesex (hiccup), or summut o’ that sort.”

“The Duke will take it seriously amiss, I’m afraid,” observed Mr. Jobson, “if you put the Marquis to the trouble of a contest.”

“Can’t ’elp that,” hiccupped Mr. Jorrocks. “If the Duke has a mind to cut his own (hiccup) throat, can’t afford to let him (hiccup) cut mine too. ’Elp yourself, and we’ll drink his Greece’s (hiccup) good ’ealth again,” added Mr. Jorrocks, setting the example by filling and passing the bottle. “Bamper toast,” hiccupped he.

Mr. Jobson eyed his glass as if it were poison.

“The Duke will think it very ungrateful, I’m afraid,” observed Jobson, raising the glass to his lips and setting it down again.

“I don’t see that,” hiccupped Mr. Jorrocks,

adding—"howsomever, drink your wine, and show your (hiccup) attachment to him."

"He made you a magistrate," observed Mr. Jobson.

"He did so," replied Mr. Jorrocks, adding—"Showed his sense there ; for real, substantial (hiccup) jestice—fifth o' George the Fourth sort o' jestice—no man can compete with (hiccup) J. (hiccup) J. With your permission, I'll give you a (hiccup) toast—a bəmper—the last bəmper I'll (hiccup) call for. I'll give you 'The fifth o' (hiccup) George the (hiccup) Fourth,' real (hiccup) palladium of our (hiccup) rights. That (hiccup) Graham will play the (hiccup) deuce with the (hiccup) fifth o' George the Fourth, if he wont let us jestices do any more (hiccup) jestice at 'ome. Here's 'The (hiccup) fifth o' (hiccup) George the Fourth,' " concluded Mr. Jorrocks, filling a bumper and drinking it off.

"That's a sentiment, I presume," observed Jobson, filling a very small quantity.

"(Hiccup) toast or (hiccup) sentiment, 'as you please," observed Mr. Jorrocks, seeing his friend's eyes looking very glassy.

"I suppose we shall be having the bull back," observed Jobson, after a pause.

"What 'n ball?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

"The bull the Duke gave you," replied Mr. Jobson. "Of course you wont keep it if you oppose the Marquis."

"I don't see that at all," observed Mr. Jorrocks, cured of his hiccup at the bare idea of losing his treasure. "I don't see that at all," added he, looking at the decanter as if he saw two. "If the ball," said he, looking very wise, "was presented to me to buy me off-standin', it would be another (hiccup) pair o' shoes altogether; but it was presented to me as a (hiccup) undeniable (hiccup) token of undeniable esteem. With your (hiccup) permission," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "we'll drink (hiccup) his 'ealth, if you please."

"We have drunk it already," observed Jobson, sick at the thoughts of another drop.

"Never mind that," hiccupped Mr. Jorrocks; "we (hiccup) drank the Duke's health twice, and we'll drink the (hiccup) Duke's (hiccup) ball's health twice two; twice two's four, and one's sivin," added he. "No man can say I'm (hiccup) drank, I think."

"Then you don't mean to return the bull?" observed Mr. Jobson, speaking very thick, and pouring the wine over the side of his glass.

"No!" roared Mr. Jorrocks, in a tone that startled Jobson, adding—"’Ow can you ax sich a question? I loves that Markis-ball too well to part with him. It may be wanity on my part, but I flatters my—(hiccup)—self his (hiccup) lordship re—re—re—recip—recipro—reciprocates the (hiccup) sentiment."

Mr. Jobson stared, and shortly after, in attempting to reach a piece of biscuit, lost his balance and fell on the floor.

Mr. Jorrocks rang the bell.

"Tell that (hiccup) Pigg to carry this (hiccup) shockin’ drucken chap to (hiccup) bed," hiccupped Mr. Jorrocks; "and let him ’ave a (hiccup) glass o’ (hiccup) sober-water, and a (hiccup) red ’erring in the mornin’."

"Yes sir," said Benjamin, eyeing Jobson’s contortions on the carpet.

"And ’ave (hiccup) Cobden ready for (hiccup) me at half-past (hiccup) six," added Mr. Jorrocks, lurching off to bed.

CHAPTER XLVI.

“The farmers are with us to a man.”

LEAGUE LIE, No. 91.

THE bitter, angry personalities of the canvass were at length stopped by the arrival of the writ.

The Duke of Donkeyton, after resorting to every expedient to get rid of our pertinacious friend, had at length been compelled to let Jeems undergo the degradation of a canvass, and the latter had endeavoured to counteract the success of Mr. Jorrocks's early start by the splendour of his retinue, the bounty of his expenditure, and the lavishness of his promises.

Money flew in all directions. He would buy a parrot of an old woman for twenty pounds whose husband was difficult to come over, or outbid Mr. Jorrocks's promised subscription to races or hounds by offering to give a gold cup, or to hunt the country himself. He would do anything !

The country was in a complete ferment. The farmers and landowners pulled well together, but the Duke's large interest, backed by the Radicals and part of the manufacturing interest, made it fearful odds against our commercial Squire.

Mr. Smoothington fortunately made light of the matter, and in his daily reports to the castle, of the success of the canvass, he repeatedly assured the Duke there was not the shadow of a doubt of the Marquis's success. As the canvass advanced he grew more confident; said that he considered the election as good as over—that old Jorrocks would never show at the hustings; and when that assertion was contradicted by one of our friend's facetious addresses, thanking the freeholders for their promises of support, and pledging himself to go to a poll, Mr. Smoothington accompanied the document by a return from the Marquis's canvass book, showing a clear majority of three hundred.

Our friend, on the other hand, had bet as many as seventy hats that he would win. The accuracy of their respective opinions was now about to be put to the test.

On the nomination day the whole country was in commotion. It rose to a man. It was a time

of year when farmers have a little leisure after harvesting, and the fineness of the latter autumn tempted the denizens of the manufacturing towns to indulge in a holiday on so exciting an occasion. A sharpish frost in the night loosened the fading leaves, leaving them ready to fall at the least breath of wind. Down they dropped, one after another, twirling round and round as they fell leisurely to the ground.

At an early hour in the morning of the nomination day, the tide of population began to flow into Sellborough. Not a chaise, not a gig, not a car, not a van, not a horse in the country but what was put in requisition. Farmers' nags stood three in a stall. The nomination was fixed for twelve o'clock, and before that hour the respective candidates had entered the town from different sides, escorted by their friends, and preceded by bands and banners. The Marquis's set out was most splendid. All the flags from the district committees at the different towns and villages were gathered together, forming a perfect forest of silk and gold, which were stationed before and after the barouche and six in which his Lordship rode. His colours were pea-green

and yellow, the rosettes and favours being composed of gold tinsel instead of yellow silk.

He was accompanied by Mr. Smoothington and his proposer and seconder, Captain Bluster and Mr. Prosey Sloman. The latter had made an unsuccessful attempt to grow whiskers under his chin. Captain Bluster's bristled most importantly red. He had been a protectionist, but the judicious representation by Mr. Jobson of what the Duke had said about his being a "good fellow and a gentleman," had driven him the other way. Bluster was now a red-hot Leaguer—far hotter than his Grace; who, indeed, was anything but a Leaguer at heart. Mr. Jobson headed the tenantry on horseback; who, with slouched hats and downcast looks, followed the carriage, looking uncommonly sulky. Mrs. Jobson, in a flaming clarence drawn by a pair of the Duke's blood bays, dressed in a beautifully made pea-green pelisse, with a yellow velvet bonnet and a green feather, and a twenty guineas point-lace veil, chaperoned a bevy of country belles; while the Duchess's pretty little French maid escorted a troop of the household dolly-mops in the break.

Altogether it was a splendid procession. The Marquis's colours waved from the balconies, windows, and shops, and appeared on the breasts or the bonnets of the fair occupants; while beards or whiskers on the chin denoted that the few men who appeared without cockades were for the young duke, as they called the Marquis.

Twenty-three young ladies were regularly annihilated by the captivating smiles and bows of the Marquis as he passed slowly through the streets, each fair recipient thinking the smile she got was the sweetest. That *old* Jorrocks had no chance, was the firm conviction of every one who saw the splendid cavalcade pass along.

Mr. Smoothington smirked, and chuckled, and rubbed his hands over and over, at the thoughts of the drubbing they would give him.

"The county will be our's for ever and a day," exclaimed he to the Marquis, as they passed under the old archway leading into the market-place.

As they entered the spacious arena, tremendous applause rent the air from the front of the spacious hustings on the far side, before which a whole army of drab-coated horsemen were assem-

bled with some half dozen bunting and glazed calico flags in the centre.

It was Mr. Jorrocks, alighting from his fire engine, in which he had driven from the house of his proposer, Mr. Hamilton Dobbin, who had been wicked enough to break away from the Duke's ranks, in spite of the dinner he had eaten.

"Now, another shout for t'ard Squire!" exclaimed Pigg, waving the only silk flag they sported, and who acted as fogleman to the party. "Now another!" repeated he, as Mr. Jorrocks advanced to the candidate's place in front of the hustings.

"*Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!*" shouted the drab coats.

Mr. Smoothington's countenance fell as he surveyed the dense mass.

"Now three for Squire Dobbin!" exclaimed Pigg, as Mr. Jorrocks's head left off acknowledging the compliment they had paid him.

Three cheers were then given for Mr. Jorrocks's proposer.

"Now three for ard Tail!" roared Pigg, flourishing his flag with "JORROCKS, THE FARMER'S

FRIEND!" upon it. Three hearty cheers followed for Mr. Heavytail, who had been chosen by the farmers to second the nomination.

The farmers then bustled away to put up their horses, and get back to secure places in front of the hustings. Mr. Jorrocks availed himself of the opportunity to pull his wig straight, and adjust a large bunch of wheat ears he had stuck in the Jorrocksian jacket button-hole (as emblematical of his creed), and which had got rather deranged in his passage through the crowd from the fire-engine on to the hustings.

He then conned over his speech.

The Marquis having arrived at the Duke's Head, where his central committee sat (at least sat towards dinner-time, when they liberally dispensed champagne and every thing expensive); the Marquis, we say, having arrived at the Duke's Head, alighted, to add the committee as a tail to the head he had brought with him, and having called for a glass of hock and soda water, his example was followed by those who durst trust their stomachs with such flatulent compounds. Bluster had a glass of brandy.

The party being formed, the Marquis set off for the hustings, walking between his proposer and

seconded amid deafening shouts of applause from the dense crowd through which they passed.

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Mr. Jorrocks rose to receive his quondam farmer friend, as the Marquis made his appearance at the back of the hustings ; his lordship's dandified garb contrasting strangely with our friend's uncouth attire.

"Well, old boy !" said the Marquis, gaily, extending his hand to Mr. Jorrocks, "so you won't be satisfied without a beating !"

"I'm not such a glutton as all that," replied our friend. "Suppose I give you one instead."

"Will you, indeed !" exclaimed the Marquis.

"I'll bet you a 'at I do," replied Mr. Jorrocks, looking very confident.

The High Sheriff's appearance at the back of the hustings, put an end to the dialogue, and that functionary advancing to the front, divided the belligerents.

Silence was then called for, and at length obtained from the sea of heads in front and the crowd upon the hustings. It was broken occasionally by an observation from Pigg, who, having availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the farmers putting up their horses, to get a few glasses of

rum, had now returned with his flag, loquaciously drunk. Johnny Wopstraw, Willey Goodheart, and a few more of Mr. Jorrocks's tenants, clustered round the gaunt fugleman, whose tobacco-streaming mouth was conspicuous above the crowd.

The High Sheriff came forward, and, after observing that he had called them together in obedience to her Majesty's writ, in order that they might choose a fit and proper representative to supply the vacancy caused by the lamented death of Mr. Guzzlegoose, begged that they would give to every gentleman, however they might differ from him in political opinion, a fair, impartial, and uninterrupted hearing; and concluding by calling upon any gentleman who had a candidate to propose to come forward and do so.

Captain Bluster then presented himself to the notice of the meeting. After looking angrily towards James Pigg, who saluted him with a cry of "*Now, Ginger toppin'!*" as he took off his hat, the Captain commenced by saying, that unless he had seen it with his own eyes, he could not have believed that an almost total stranger to the county could have had the vanity to conceive himself the fittest champion of its battles, and

he certainly did not think Mr. Jorrocks was likely to add much to his character by his appearance in opposition to the popular son of the most popular parents under the sun—[loud cheers from the whiskerites, and roars of laughter from the drab coats.]

For his part, he thought Mr. Jorrocks was the last man who ought to have thought of filling such a position—*he* who had received the lavished honours and favour of the parent ought never to appear in opposition to the son—[renewed cheers, mingled with hisses.] He who had feasted at Donkeyton Castle—eating the Duke's venison and drinking his wine, might surely make some better return than attempting to defraud the Duke's son of his birth-right.—[renewed applause, with increasing disapprobation.]

The Captain then referred to a card which he carried in the palm of his hand for “the word,” and again went on.

He had the honour of proposing a candidate to fill the vacancy in the representation occasioned by the lamented death of Mr. Guzzlegoose, and he would not pay the valued friend he was about to put in nomination so poor a compliment as to say, that he challenged comparison

with the competitor opposed to him—[Captain Bluster looking at Mr. Jorrocks as if that gentleman would make him sick]; but he would fearlessly assert that, look where they would—north, south, east, or west,—they could not lay their hands on a gentleman more pre-eminently qualified than his much-beloved and highly-exalted friend—[cheers and great uproar, mingled with cries of ‘Where’s Big-loaf Bowker?’ from the drab coats]. That friend was the nobleman now standing on his right—one who’s every interest was identified with theirs—whose vast possessions must suffer if their interests were injured, and who had, therefore, every reason for advocating such measures as would best promote their common prosperity.”

“Weal done, ard Ginger toppin!” exclaimed Pigg, flourishing his flag amid roars of laughter.

“I see,” said Captain Bluster, eyeing the inscription on it, “Jorrocks, the farmer’s friend, painted on that flag,” pointing towards where Pigg stood, with his tobacco-stained mouth gaping wide open to catch every word the Captain said. “I see,” repeated he, “Jorrocks, the farmer’s friend, painted on that flag.”

“It’s not painted—*it’s geelt!*” exclaimed

Pigg, giving it another flourish, amid great shouting.

“I see,” said Captain Bluster, for the third time, “Jorrocks, the farmer’s friend, in gilt letters on that flag.”

“Aye, *that’s* it!” roared Pigg, jealous of the honor of his banner.

“But will any man tell me,” continued Captain Bluster, “that my noble friend is not as much the farmer’s friend as this self-elected champion, John Jorrocks? Who, let me ask, is Mr. Jorrocks, that he should all at once set up as the champion of the farmers’ interests? What has he done to forward agriculture? Has he, like my noble friend the Duke of Donkeyton, a model farm, on which every new machine is exhibited, every new experiment tried? where every species of manure — Hunt’s bone dust — Hunt’s half inch — soap ashes — rape cake — rags — new Bristol manure — Chie fou — guano — nitrate of soda —”

“*Hoot ye and your nitrate o’ sober!*” roared Pigg; “MUCK’S YOUR MAN!” an exclamation that caused such an outburst of laughter, as completely to put the Captain out.

The Under-sheriff pointing Pigg out, desired

the man with the dirty mouth, and “Jorrocks for ever” round his hat, to hold his tongue, or he would order him into custody.

Captain Bluster, after a long pause, again resumed—

Not only was his dear and noble friend the Duke of Donkeyton an active promoter of agricultural improvement, but the noble lord beside him—a worthy son of a worthy sire—trod in the footsteps of his Grace. The Marquis of Bray was well known to scientific farmers as the inventor of a valuable—an unequalled draining tile.

“Never sich a thing!” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks; “I inwented it!”

The sheriff called Mr. Jorrocks to order.

Captain Bluster repeated what he said: he had it on the authority of a gentleman behind him (Joshua Sneakington), that the Marquis of Bray had invented a most valuable—a most durable draining tile; and yet not content with attempting to defraud the noble Marquis of what he (Captain Bluster) designated his birth-right—the representation of the county, this farmer’s champion, because the noble lord had proclaimed the discovery at his (Mr. Jorrocks’s) house, now wanted to filch the Marquis of his draining tile

too. [Great uproar, mingled with hisses, and cries of " Oh, you horrid old cheat ! Oh, you shocking bad man ! " and other symptoms of disapprobation from the whiskerites.]

" THAT'S A LEE ! " roared Pigg, who immediately ducked under.

He (Captain Bluster) felt satisfied the county would visit such conduct with the punishment it deserved, and with that firm conviction he felt equal pride and pleasure in proposing to the electors, as a fit and proper knight to represent their interests in Parliament, James Frederick Charles Fox Plantagenet Russell Bolinbroke Bray, commonly called the Marquis of Bray, of Donkeyton Castle.

Mr. Prosy Sloman came forward to second the nomination, with an uncommonly lengthy, well-rounded speech in his pocket ; but, unfortunately, when it came to the point, he had studied it so much that he could not let it off ; so, after gaping a few seconds at the crowd, he simply seconded the nomination, leaving much good abuse of Mr. Jorrocks unsaid.

It was now the turn of the gentlemen at the other end of the hustings, and, accordingly, Mr. Hamilton Dobbin presented himself to the meet-

ing, and was received with cheers from the drab-coats, and hisses from the whisker-on-chin-ites.

He commenced by saying that he should occupy a very brief portion of their time in proposing the gentleman who had been unanimously adopted by the party he belonged to, to fight the battle of their interests; because, while he felt his own incompetence to go fully into the question that now agitated their attention, he had every belief that the candidate he had to propose was quite able to do so; he therefore felt great satisfaction in leaving the arguments in the hands of his esteemed friend Mr. Jorrocks, whom he begged to recommend as a fit and proper knight to represent their interests in parliament.

The nomination was received with great applause from the farmers, and hisses from the whiskerites.

Mr. Heavytail then raised his voice to its utmost pitch, and spoke in such a tone as to be clearly audible to several ladies and gentlemen on the church tower across the market-place.

“GENTLEMEN,” said he, “IF YOU WANT TO CUT YOUR OWN THROATS, YOU’LL VOTE FOR BRAY; IF YOU WANT TO LIVE AND LET LIVE, YOU’LL

VOTE FOR OUR SQUIRE. [Great applause from the drab-coats.] I SECOND OUR SQUIRE!"

The High Sheriff then inquired if any other gentleman had a candidate to propose, and being answered by a volley of negatives, he called on the Marquis of Bray to address the meeting.

In compliance with the High Sheriff's requisition, his Lordship then uncovered his well-waxed ringlets, and throwing back his silk-lined blue dress-coat, bowed, and placed his primrose-coloured kid-gloved right hand upon his heart, in return for the deafening huzzas and waving of handkerchiefs, ribbons, and hats, that greeted his appearance.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, when the applause had somewhat subsided; "ladies and gentlemen" repeated he, looking sweet at Mrs. Jobson and party who were drawn up a little on the left, "permit me, in the first place, to return my most heartfelt and cordial thanks for the kind, the flattering reception you honoured me with on my arrival this day; a reception so cheering, so enthusiastic and exhilarating, that we cannot but admire the indomitable courage of my farmer-friend on the left—the god of corn, as his followers call him"—the Marquis looking

at our rosy-gilled friend, with his bunch of wheat ears under his nose; "we cannot, I say, but admire his indomitable courage in coming here to receive the hearty drubbing his temerity is certain to insure him."

"Are you a goin' to bet me that 'at we talked about?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

"For," continued the Marquis, without noticing the interruption, "when I look at the splendid array of beauty—an array that I firmly believe no town of this size ever before contained; when I reflect that those bright eyes and sweet looks respond to sympathizing hearts arrayed in the cause of the poor man's home, whose interest I stand here to advocate, I say it is morally impossible to doubt, for one moment, what will be the issue of this great and virtuous contest; a contest in which the legitimate laws of nature are ranged against unnatural monopoly and close fistcd selfishness!" [Great applause, and renewed fluttering of handkerchiefs, flags, and ribbons]. "But, ladies and gentlemen," continued his Lordship, "let me not be led away by those enchanting smiles, and those applauding cheers, from the important duty that has brought us together this day; and first, let me return my

most cordial thanks to my proposer and seconder, for the kind and flattering terms in which they introduced me to your notice; terms that I cannot but feel are infinitely superior to any humble merits of mine, but which will stimulate me to such acts as will render me worthy of your approbation." [Renewed applause, and waving of handkerchiefs].

"Gentlemen," continued the Marquis, addressing himself to the male sex alone, "you are met here this day, as our worthy High Sheriff has told you, to exercise one of the most important privileges of life—that of choosing a representative of your opinions in the House of Commons; and in proportion to the magnitude of the occasion ought to be the vigilance and circumspection of your conduct in the exercise of so sacred a trust." [Great applause]. "It may appear almost superfluous in one, born and bred among you, whose ancestors have ever been conspicuous in the cause of legitimate improvement and good government, to enter into any lengthened explanation of his political opinions."

"*Quite* superfluous! *quite* superfluous!" exclaimed Mr. Smoothington.

"*Quite* superfluous! *quite* superfluous!" re-

peated Joshua Sneakington, and several others behind.

“My political opinions,” continued the Marquis, “are the political opinions that in by-gone days were wont to secure the confidence of the freeholders in those who have gone before me — opinions from which no member of my family has ever swerved, and which I trust—confidently trust—will secure me the honour of your support” [Great cheering].

“True, it is,” continued his lordship, “that the god of corn,” turning towards Mr. Jorrocks, “impelled by the fear of alarmists, and perhaps the mischief of the frolicksome, has decked himself out in wheat-ears and poppies.”

“There arnt no poppies in the case !” exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, adjusting his bouquet, adding aloud to himself—“who ever seed poppies at this time of year !”

“Has decked himself out in wheat-ears,” bowed the Marquis, “and stands forward as the farmers’ friend ; but who, gentlemen, I ask you, is more likely to be truly and sincerely the farmers’ friend than the humble individual now addressing you, and whose every interest is identified with agriculture—whose best hopes are

centered in the soil [tremendous applause]. Agriculture, gentlemen, is a pursuit that has been fostered and encouraged by the greatest men, by all whom the page of history records as famous in the annals of countries [great applause]. The greatest statesmen, the greatest scholars, the greatest generals have each found, in turning from their schemes of government, their studies, or the toil of warfare, solace and enjoyment in the harmless simplicity and the interesting relaxation it affords [renewed applause]. Every man whose opinion is valuable—every man whose breast glows with a genuine feeling of patriotism, joins in testifying the importance of agriculture.” Immense applause, followed by Mr. Wopstraw drawling out—

“Upon the who-o-le, I think I’ve heard that before.”

This rather put the Marquis out, and in the hubbub that ensued he got time to collect himself and turn on another tack.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “the only point of difference, as you are perhaps aware, between my honourable competitor and myself is that of corn. On all other questions I believe our opinions coincide, and, but for this solitary question, the

god of corn would have followed our banner, with most likely the majority of his supporters. Far be it from me, gentlemen, to treat with levity the honest, conscientious fears and opinions of any class of men, unfounded and groundless though I believe them to be. Recall to your recollection, gentlemen, the panic that prevailed on the importation of foreign cattle! see how visionary were your views and conjectures then! The same, I venture to predict, will be the case with the importation of foreign corn. It will come in; your fears will pass away, or will only be remembered as matter of surprise—surprise that you could so blindly have stood in the way of your own interest.” [Loud applause from the whisker-chin-ites, and cries of “No; no,” from the drab-coats.]

“Upon the who-o-le, the climate’s against us,” drawled Wopstraw.

“The farmers are not the only parties called upon to make a sacrifice,” continued the Marquis, “if any sacrifice there is to be. Every article of consumption, every article of wear—the hat on your head—the shoe on your foot—will come down in price, and all things accommodate themselves to the new era [loud applause]. If

farmers yield the trifling duty on corn, a duty that many of the most intelligent of their body consider is no protection whatever, they, in their turn, will have the duty taken off seeds, and they will get their canary-seed, their anniseed, their grass-seed, their mustard-seed, their parsley-seed, and my friend the god of corn will even get his poppy-seed duty free [great laughter and applause]. So the housekeeper will get her spices—her cloves, her ginger, her mace, her nutmegs, her cinnamon, and her pepper. And *you*, my fair friends,” continued the Marquis, addressing himself to the ladies, “you will get your ermine, your chinchilla, your swanskins without a tax. Silks, velvets, and sarcenets will come in at continental prices ; and gauzes, tulles, crapes, and lawns no longer continue matters of luxury” [great applause and waving of handkerchiefs]. “All things,” continued the Marquis, “will be placed upon a new footing, and the dawn of that young and stirring mind which so engages the attention of the public will burst upon the astonished world in all the splendour of meridian day [immense applause]. But beyond—far beyond—all these considerations will be the feeling of patriotism the act will engender. You will be the poor man’s

friend—you will invest the poor man's home with plenty—you will bring joy and gladness to his humble hearth—you will convert the squalid victims of penurious fare into stalwart sons of Albion's isle, and cause the

——— 'Happy tenant of a humble shed
To smile at the storm that whistles o'er his head.' "

His lordship concluded amidst the most uproarious demonstrations of applause.

When they had subsided, a loud cry was raised for Mr. Jorrocks, who, on hearing the Marquis break off about the greatest statesmen, the greatest generals, and so on, had availed himself of the opportunity for retiring to the back of the hustings to drink a glass of brandy and water, and he had now got blocked out. Mr. Heavy-tail having made way for him, our friend at length showed at the front, and was greeted with loud cheers from his own supporters, and the most discordant yells and hisses from the Marquis's party. Silence being at length restored, he essayed to proceed.

"Gen'lemen," said he, looking very indignantly at a knot of hissers who still kept interrupting; "gen'lemen," said he, "afore I opens

my private account with you I wish to make a few obserwations on a few of the obserwations that have been made upon me. I doosn't like Captain Bluster's speech ; he had no business to speak o' me in the way he did. He looked at me, too, jest as if I was a bag o' guano. It wasn't the ticket at all I'm sure when we've had anything to transact together, any fift o' George the Fourth, or anything of that sort, he's always found me quite agreeable—quite the lady, and I don't think he had any business to ax in sich a himperent tone who I was. I pays every man twenty shillin's in the pund, and I never heard no one's respectability doubted wot did that [applause]. I've been brought here at a great personal sacrifice, both of cash and comfort, to fight the battle of the farmers—and fight it I will."

"That's reet ard un!" exclaimed Pigg, adding—"Three cheers for t'ard squire!"

Three tremendous huzzas followed. When they were done, the Marquis's party gave three cheers for the Marquis.

"I've been brought here," continued Mr. Jor-rocks, "by a great lot o' farmers; they came and 'unted me out at my 'ouse at 'ome, and would have me. That shows the

hopinion they 'ave of me. I never axed to be made parliament man of. The farmers came and said that they were like to be beggared, and axed if I would stand quietly by and see 'em?—[loud applause]. I said, the farmers and I rowed in the same boat—that wot was bad for them would be bad for me, and wice versa—[cheers]. The Captain talked as if the guano, and nitrate o' sober dodge was all the Duke's; but I appeals to those around me if guano, nitrate o' sober, or any of them hartificial compounds, 'ave a more hardent—a more enthusiastic supporter nor myself!"

"Upon the who-o-o-le, I should say not," drawled Johnny Wopstraw.

"*Muck's your man!*" roared Pigg.

"Nay, more," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "I did wot the Duke never did—I inwented a machine of a most wonderful capacity. A machine that I really dirs'n't set a goin' for fear it should swamp field labour altogether. I mentions that to show that I'm a practical farmer and a friend to the poor. My friend the Markiss," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "has made you a werry beautiful hoiley oration—one wot called forth the applause both of pit and boxes," Mr. Jorrocks looking

towards the carriages and balcony in which the ladies were ranged. "It's the privilege of young gen'lemen in ringlets and primrose-coloured gloves to obtain the plaudits o' the fair sex—fine flowery language is sure to find customers with them. Now, I may fearlessly say that the ladies have'nt a more hardent admirer nor I am ; but gen'lemen like myself, of maturer years, must rest our claims to public favour upon the broader and better basis of sound sense rather than of heloquence." [Laughter, hisses, and applause, above which Pigg's "Gan it, ard un ! Jorrocks for ever !" rose conspicuous].

"My noble friend—for friend I must still call him, for he gave me the most unimpeachable bull wotever adorned ring and chain—my noble friend, I say, in the plenitude of his humour, has christened me the god o' corn ; but I will tell my noble friend that hargument is as far above heloquence as corn is afore flowers — [Cheers]. We can do werry well without flowers, but corn we must 'ave. It sounds werry well talking about bein' the poor man's friend, but I say he is the best poor man's friend wot gives him a good day's pay for a good day's work—[Applause]. Vot signifies it to the poor man gettin' a height-

penny loaf for fourpence if he has not fourpence to buy it with?"—[Renewed applause].

"Gan it, ard un!" exclaimed Pigg, adding, with a grin and shake of his head, "a sink, but he's a *good un* to jaw!"

"Then, I would like to ax my noble friend," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "'ow he thinks to improve the breed o' the 'uman race, if he makes us poor farmers lay our land down to grass or pine-apples, throwin' the corn trade into the hands of mouncheer, and drivin' the chaws into mills and print works. Wot'un a man, for instance, would Mr. 'Eavytail 'ave been," asked Mr. Jorrocks, patting Mr. Heavytail's broad back as the latter stood beside him, "wot'un a man would Mr. 'Eavytail ha' been if he'd been brought up a shuttle weaver?"—[Loud applause].

"I am old enough, gen'lemen, to remember the time," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "when that great man, Napoleon Bonaparte—a man whose werry name worked one wuss nor a whole box o' Morrison's pills, I'm old enough, I say gen'lemen, to remember the time when that great man, in the plenitude of his imperence, climbed up the column on Boulogne 'eights, and, shakin' his

mawley at England, swore he'd pitch into her like twenty thousand bricks."—[Roars of laughter and applause, Mr. Jorrocks suiting the action to the word, and menacing the crowd with his fist].

"Then, gen'lemen," continued he, "my frind Good'eart and my frind Wopstraw—John Jorrocks himself—all the true and undeniable tramps—rose to a man, and swore we'd be *blank'd* if he should!"

Roars of laughter and applause followed this delicate announcement, which were again roused by Johnny Wopstraw drawling out, "Upon the wh-o-o-le, I wasn't a soldier!"

"Who knows," continued Mr. Jorrocks, without noticing the observation, "who knows but the Prince de Johnville or Prince de Tomville, or whatever they call the chap, may brew up another storm, and in the row and racket that ensues, who knows but another Napoleon le grand may turn to the top, who'll swear that we shalln't 'ave another grain o' corn from the continent? Then, gen'lemen, if you've laid your land down to grass, and turned your stout yeomanry into stockin' makers, who's to supply us with bread?"

and where are you to find Good'earts to wop Johnny Crapaud?—[Thunders of applause, lasting for some seconds].

“Wot consolation will it be to the starvin’ population for frind John Bright to point to his many-windowed ware’ouse, and say, ‘Oh, never mind my ’earties! that’s chock full o’ calico at a penny a yard?—[Renewed applause].

“Gen’lemen, I can’t eat calico,” observed Mr. Jorrocks, with uplifted hands, amidst the most outrageous laughter.

“*Nor I nouter!*” roared Pigg, stuffing a fresh quid into his mouth.

“Gen’lemen,” continued Mr. Jorrocks, “cheap bread’s a capital cry, but wot’s the use o’ cheap bread to the poor man if he harn’t got no money to buy it with? [Great applause, with cries of “That’s the rub!” “Go it Jorrocks!” “Now another!”]

“Bambazeen’s and sarc’nets, wot the Markiss promises so cheap, will not compensate for the want o’ wittles!—‘You take my life when you take the means whereby I lives,’ observes Hudibras or some other gen’leman; and you’ll destroy the ’usbandman if you annihilate hagriculture.

“My noble frind talked about the legitimate

laws o' natur' and close-fisted somethin'," observed Mr. Jorrocks. "I'm more a fifth o' George the Fourth than a law o' natur' man, but it strikes me if the manufacturers want to try a new system, they should pay the National Debt off, and let's all start fair, as the parson said to the Cornish wreckers as he stole down from the pulpit.

"I think, gen'lemen," continued Mr. Jorrocks, after a pause, "that's about all I've got to say to you. It's for you to say whether you prefer the luxtery o' cheap bambaseen and carraway-seeds for nothin', or the old English beef and barley-loaves of our forefathers. It's true the Markiss has some werry pretty gals on his side; howsom-ever, it's fortunate they havn't got no wotes, otherwise they'd a-been sure to have been given in the 'aberdashery line. As it is, we'll 'ave a fair stand hup fight for it; and as the great Tom Spring would say,

'May the best man vin!''

Mr. Jorrocks concluded an animated address by throwing up his hat amid very general applause.

An artisan, in his working dress, with a leather

apron tucked round his waist, and a faded green neckcloth about his neck (an active member of the Sellborough Anti-Corn-Law League), here climbed on to the hustings, and intimated that he wanted to ask Mr. Jorrocks a few questions.

“Questins!” exclaimed our Squire, eyeing him with surprise. “Questins! I don’t think,” added he, pulling out his watch and looking at it; “I don’t think I’m a-goin’ to answer no questins.”

“Not answer any!” repeated the man with surprise.

“No,” replied Mr. Jorrocks; adding, “I’ve got a Muscovy duck for dinner, and I’m afeard it’ll be overdone.”

“Well,” observed the man in astonishment, “I certainly shalln’t vote for you!”

“P’raps you wouldn’t ha’ done that any how,” replied our Squire.

“Upon the wh-o-o-le, he has’nt got a vote,” observed Wopstraw.

“Ye come down there!” cried Pigg, giving the fellow a thump on the head with his flag-staff; adding, “de ye think a parliament man has nout to de but talk to such rubbish as ye? Grou whiskers on your chin like Ginger

toppin yonder, if you maun make yoursel' conspicuous."

The High-Sheriff then called for a show of hands. A forest of them was immediately held up for the Marquis, amid thunders of applause, waving of handkerchiefs, and rolling of drums. The Sheriff then called upon those who were for Mr. Jorrocks to hold up theirs.

A very small number appeared in comparison to what were held up for the Marquis; and after the roars of applause the triumph produced had subsided, the Sheriff declared the show to have fallen in favour of his Lordship.

"AR DEMAND A POLL!" roared Heavytail, with such a thump of the fist on the hustings as would have felled an ox.

CHAPTER XLVII.

“ For whom do you poll ? ”

IN less than an hour the late densely-crowded town was occupied only by its own inhabitants, and the few drunken toppers who filled the public houses—men who, at election times, drank from week’s end to week’s end. The Marquis set off in great glee to Donkeyton Castle, accompanied by the party who attended him in the morning, to tell the victory of the day ; and the farmers quietly got their horses, and wended their way home by twos or by threes, as occasion suited.

“ Upon the who-o-ole I think the Marquis ’ll be hard to beat,” observed Wopstraw, as he mounted his mealy-muzzled bay.

“ We mun never despair ! ” replied Willey Goodheart. “ I always said in Boney’s time, it’s never no use being afraid. I really believe, if the

French had thought we were frightened, they'd have come over and eat us all up; terrible people for eatin', they say."

"We must stir ourselves to a man," said John Brick, clattering away, much to the astonishment of his great black horse.

Many a heavy-heeled carter went home at an unusual pace that day.

The printing presses of the respective parties were now hard at full work. It was the eve of publication-day of both papers, and the great "WE's" of the *Dozy Independent* and the *Church and State Gazette* sat in their back rooms, combing and riddling the speeches of the respective candidates into English. Independently of the newspaper reports, each party printed handbills for general distribution, containing their own version of the story. The Marquis's procession was detailed in glowing colours. The bands, the banners, the ribbons, the ladies, the enthusiasm that prevailed, and the surpassing talent that characterised his address.

The *Dozy Independent* "WE" treated poor Mr. Jorrocks very small.

"This curious old codger," said the editor in his leading article; "an amalgamation of a

cockney and a countryman, half buck half haw-buck, addressed the assembled multitude with a vehemence and an energy truly surprising for a man of his years, but in a dialect perfectly unintelligible to our reporters. It is lamentable to see a respectable-looking old gentleman with, we understand, many amiable qualities, making a merry-andrew of himself at the bidding of a desperate and expiring faction. 'Has the old gentleman no friends?' was the question we repeatedly heard asked; and, in sober earnestness, we ask it ourselves—*has he no friends?*"

On the other hand, *The Church and State Gazette*, eulogized Mr. Jorrocks, his sayings and his doings, and made a perfect hero of him.

"We heartily congratulate the county on the creditable exhibition Mr. Jorrocks made on the hustings this day. His reasoning, his language, his manner, his dress, his address, was all that could be wished by the most zealous patriot. We never listened with greater pleasure to any speech. It was a perfect master-piece of impassioned eloquence. Bold, vigorous, and concise, it had all the fervour of a Stanley, with the subdued pathos of a Canning.

"We will not detain our readers from the gratifi-

cation its perusal is sure to afford, by any further observations of our own, but conclude by again congratulating the county on the fortunate selection it has made."

The paper then went on to give the following version of the proceedings, and of Mr. Jorrocks's speech, which we recommend to the notice of all other editors of Church and State Gazettes throughout the kingdom, some of whom send their champions out much worse mounted than they find them:—

" Sellborough.

" At eleven o'clock to-day, John Jorrocks, Esq., of Hillingdon Hall, one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County—the chosen champion of the agricultural interest—made his public entry into our town, attended by an immense cavalcade of yeomanry, and farmers on horseback. The procession was preceded by numerous rich and beautiful flags, and a full brass band in uniform, (three trumpeters in dirty ducks and high-logs). The honourable gentleman rode in an elegant triumphal car (the old fire-engine), and was attended by his proposer, Hamilton Dobbin, Esq. His seconder, Mr. Mark Heavytail, of the Pet farm, one of the oldest and most extensive

farmers in the county, headed the horsemen. In number they far exceeded a thousand; some thought two thousand: but, perhaps, fifteen hundred would be about the mark—all freeholders!

“Precisely at twelve o’clock, the High Sheriff appeared on the hustings; and the usual formalities having been observed, the respective candidates were proposed and seconded.

“The Marquis of Bray addressed the vast assemblage first; but we regret that the total want of accommodation for the gentlemen of the press prevented our reporter catching a single word of what he said.

“Mr. Jorrocks then came forward, and was received with the most deafening applause, accompanied by the waving of handkerchiefs, and general signs of approbation. When silence was at length restored, the honourable gentleman spoke nearly as follows:—

“Mr. High Sheriff and Gentlemen—Before I advert to the important business that has brought us together this day, allow me to notice an inquiry made by the proposer of my noble friend, the Marquis of Bray, as to who I am—[cheers]. I was in hopes, gentlemen, that the time I have now spent among you—the inter-

course I have had with you, coupled with the interest I have taken in the promotion of agricultural science, and, I trust, the faithful discharge of my magisterial duties, would have exempted me from such an inquiry; but, gentlemen, lest the unanswered question of the gallant Captain should lead any to suppose that I am an ambitious adventurer standing forward for the mere gratification of my own vanity, or the still baser motives of personal aggrandizement, permit me to say that I am closely connected with the landed interest of this county; and that I was sought in the retirement of private life by the spontaneous requisition of a large body of my brother landowners and farmers to fight the battle of our common cause'—[immense applause, with cries of 'So you were! so you were!']

"The gallant Captain," continued Mr. Jorrocks, "spoke in glowing terms of the Duke of Donkeyton's devotion to agriculture and the expense he incurred in trying experiments, but he (Mr. Jorrocks) fearlessly appealed to the assembled county to say if the farming interest had a truer or more liberal patron than himself! [Cheers, and cries of 'No, no!—it hasn't! it hasn't!']

“Without wishing to detract from the merits of the Duke of Donkeyton, he might refer to his own labours in the cause of good farming and scientific improvement. He had invented a machine so curious in its structure, so comprehensive in its operations, that, trembling at the monster he had called into existence, he had not dared to use it, lest it should supersede manual labour, and so throw thousands of industrious poor out of employment! [Great applause.]

“The noble Lord had addressed them with great talent and eloquence. Though opposed to the opinions his Lordship had urged, he (Mr. Jorrocks) could not be insensible to the ability with which he had advanced them. If he (Mr. Jorrocks) felt himself unable to compete with the noble Lord in the display of flowery metaphor, he trusted to supply the deficiency by the use of sounder arguments [cheers]. He stood there the defender of British agriculture, and, in his opinion, argument was as superior to metaphor as the yellow waving corn was to the gay *parterre* [cheers]. Flowers we could do without, but corn was a matter of vital necessity. The noble Lord talked of his sympathy for the poor, but he (Mr. Jorrocks) yielded to no man in attachment to

the lower orders [applause]. He wished to see the labouring man fully employed and well paid. What matter did it make to the poor man that he could buy an eightpenny loaf for fourpence, if he has not fourpence to buy it with? Would it increase the demand for labour to throw all the arable land out of tillage? He thought not; neither would it be prudent to depend upon foreigners for food.

“‘I am old enough, gentlemen,’ continued Mr. Jorrocks, ‘to remember the time when that great man, Napoleon Buonaparte—a man at whose name princes trembled and empires shook—I am old enough, I say, to remember the time when that great man, in the plenitude of his power, menaced England from Boulogne heights, threatening to close the ports of Europe against us. Wars, gentlemen, have been, and wars may be again; and if a second Napoleon should arise, how should we manage if he were to do what his predecessor threatened? Would it appease the hunger of the starving millions for Mr. Bright to offer the contents of his warehouse to clothe them? Again, if the stalwart yeomanry, who in former days joined the flower and chivalry of England, were annihilated, who should we get to fight the battles of

our common cause? Shall we be unmindful of the poet's truism—

‘That a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied?’

“‘Never, gentlemen!’ continued he; ‘never! [loud cheers]. Let us not be deluded out of the substance of our national independence by the shadow of foreign advantages; let us adhere to the flag that for a thousand years has ‘braved the battle and the breeze,’ and, in the coming contest for this county, let every man remember the emphatic language of Nelson—

‘England expects that every man will do his duty.’

“The honourable gentleman concluded amidst the most enthusiastic demonstrations of applause.

“A show of hands was then called for and taken, but our reporter has omitted to supply us with the result. From what we saw, however, we have little doubt it would be greatly in favour of Mr. Jorrocks.”

Now for the election.

The polling commenced with great vigour on both sides, but the result of the first day fully justified the confidence with which Mr. Smooth-

ington had assured the Duke, as they quaffed their Burgundy and Bordeaux after the nomination, at Donkeyton Castle, that the Marquis's success was quite certain. There not having been a contested election in the county since the passing of the Reform Bill, the machinery was not in very good order, and the returns from the different polling places were badly made; but all accounts agreed that the Marquis was considerably a-head, and Mr. Smoothington taking the highest number that he heard, told the Duke his son was more than a hundred a-head. His Grace was rejoiced—was sure “they were popular—monstrous popular!”

On the other hand, the agricultural interest, nothing daunted by their candidate's position on the poll, moved heaven and earth to reverse his situation on the second. Agents and canvassers scoured the county during the night, and every voter was looked after that could be got to the poll.

The League distributed tons of tracts.

A very unusual activity, for a second day's polling, prevailed throughout the county, and drab-coats and whisker-on-chin-ites, who had never been looked for, cast up most unex-

pectedly at the different polling booths; many absentees arrived, some out of gaol—debtors of course.

Still, Mr. Smoothington was confident they couldn't beat the Duke.

A splendid chair was fitted up for the chairing—green velvet with gold lace; and a grand procession arranged from the castle, for the declaration of the poll day.

“We'll annihilate this old Tom Jorrocks,” said the Duke, as the lengthening procession drove from the door; “impudent man, monstrous impudent man!” added he, hurrying away to his library.

Many rumours were afloat as to the ultimate result of the poll. Mr. Jorrocks's committee had published a statement of the first day's one, which left our Cockney Squire in a minority of twenty only; still it was the general opinion that the Marquis was far more a-head. In this opinion our friend participated, and had it not been for the convenience of arranging the payment of his hats, he would hardly have taken the trouble of returning to Sellborough. As it was, the Marquis's dazzling procession had entered, and his Lordship and friends had taken their

place on the hustings before the Squire made his appearance. A vast concourse of persons filled the spacious market-place, and compliments passed current while the Sheriff was superintending the casting-up of the poll-books. At length he appeared on the hustings, and pencils began to appear to take down the numbers as they issued from his lips. A breathless silence ensued as he declared the numbers to be—

For John Jorrocks, Esq. 2617

For the Marquis of Bray 2615

Each party was struck dumb with astonishment.

“Impossible!” “Wrong!” “Mistake!” “Can never be!” issued from the whiskerites; and “Thame! thame!” was lisped by the ladies. A rotten cabbage was thrown at the Sheriff. This roused him from the stupor into which he also seemed to have fallen, and after calling for order, a semblance of which was at length obtained, he declared John Jorrocks, Esq., to be duly elected.

Our Cockney Squire stood in a state of apparent bewilderment receiving the congratulations of his friends, amidst the greatest uproar from the populace. He did not know what he was about. Many of the public-house mob were

perfectly furious, and would have torn the Jorrockian jacket off his back if they could have reached him.

After some time spent in dumb show by our friend, each party exerting their lungs to the utmost, the Sheriff sent him word, if he wished to address the meeting, he should now do so; otherwise he would adjourn the court in order to make his return to the writ.

Our friend then stood forward, and uncovered, amidst the most discordant yells and a volley of missiles. That being a game at which two can play, a rotten egg speedily closed one of Captain Bluster's eyes, when all hands on the hustings began to be particularly anxious for order. Mr. Jorrocks's friends rallied round him.

After some seconds spent in dumb show, he at length articulated as follows—

“ Mr. 'Igh Sheriff and gen'lemen, I'm perfectly flummoxed at the announcement jest made. I can't think it's true. There must be some mistake, the bookkeeper must 'ave cast hup his accounts wrong! It can never be true that I've beat a Markiss.”

Cries of “ No, no ! ” “ Yes, yes ! ” “ All right ! all right ! ”

"Howsomever, beat or not beat, I'm quite beat for words. Sich a thing never entered my calkilation. John Jorrocks an M.P!."

"Whe'd ha' thout it?" exclaimed Pigg.

"Ay, indeed, who would?" replied Mr. Jorrocks.

"Friend!" exclaimed a Quaker (Mr. Obadiah Brown), "friend!" repeated he, "thy footman there," pointing to Pigg, "told me an untruth respecting thy habits of life."

"Ow so?" inquired Mr. Jorrocks.

"He assured me thou wert a teetotaller."

"Ne doot!" said Pigg, "ne doot!"

"How canst thou say so, when thy master was drunk the night before last?"

"Why! why!" replied Pigg, "that's nout again his bein' a tea-to-taller."

"But, friend," continued Mr. Obadiah Brown, appealing to Mr. Jorrocks, "my brother and myself voted for thee on the understanding that thou wert a teetotaller."

"Sorry you should av ad so bad an opinion on me," replied Mr. Jorrocks.

"But thou surely will not retain the votes!" rejoined Mr. Brown. "They were obtained under false pretences."

"*That's a lee!*" roared Pigg.

"*I say they were,*" retorted Mr. Brown, with vehemence.

"*Ar say they warn't!*" roared Pigg. "Thou axed me when ar canvassed thee, gin wor ard Squire was a tea-to-taller, and ar said Yis!"

"Then he's *not*, I say!" retorted Mr. Brown.

"He sells tea ony how," replied Pigg.

The High Sheriff called the parties to order, observing that it was Mr. Jorrocks should address the meeting, if he were inclined; otherwise the Marquis of Bray had the privilege.

Mr. Jorrocks begged pardon. "He really was so struck iv a heap that he did'nt know wot he was about. He would be werry much obliged to any one who would tell him what to say. He was never in such a pucker afore. Yes, once! No, it wasn't. It was summut like though. He had arranged a beautiful speech to return thanks for his ball winnin' a prize, instead of which they axed him to return thanks for his losin' it, and he couldn't. It was too much for his feelin's. So now he'd come to tell his friends where to apply to for their 'ats, instead of which he had to trouble them for them, and to thank the electors who had so gallantly won them for him. [Loud

cheers]. He believed there were seventy of them. As many as would last him his life, he thought. It was, indeed, a great wictory! The League, too, had gained a great wictory—a great *moral* wictory! Nothin' could be better. Two great wictories! Both parties pleased! They had elected him to Parliament, and he was ready to sacrifice the plisures of retirement and the luxtury of pure country hair, in the enjoyment of which men grumbl'd if they died afore they were a 'undred. He was ready, he said, to sacrifice these at their biddin'. He didn't exactly know who he'd support when he got hup. Young England, at one time, had favour in his eyes; but they lost it by steeple chasin' — above all, by Conin'sby ridin' a steeple chase in Hautumn.

“ ‘ Upon the who-o-le,’ as his friend Johnny Wopstraw would say, he didn't know but he'd support Sir Robert. It was no use doin' things by 'alves. He would go the 'ole 'og—over shoes over boots. He'd been a vig all his life, and thought to have died a vig; but inwestin' money in land, and findin' hé was likely to be done out of his land, had changed his opinions on that pint. He really thought Sir Robert was a downright

clever man. He had found the country reg'larly hup the spout, and had now restored it to hunex-ampled prosperity. If Sir Robert 'ill stick by us poor farmers, I really think I'll stick by him," continued Mr. Jorrocks. "Be wot they call Conservative. 'Tory men with vig measures,' as Conin'sby says. Sir Robert had played him rayther a dirty trick about his ball, but he could forgive him. He could forgive him, and he believed the generous hanimal could forgive him. Partin' with his ball would give him unmitigated pain, but he couldn't take him hup to Parliament. He must, however, be partin' himself. It was past two o'clock, and he should like to be chaired, for he'd promised to dine with his neighbour, little Trotter, whose beautiful darter had been married that mornin'. It would be a great surprise to Trot to find him returned to Parliament as well as to dine with him. He should, however, never forget the kindness of the farmers. He would keep a watchful eye on their interest. He would make his trusty Scotch bailiff, James Pigg, manager of his property. He should establish a model farm, like the Duke of Donkeyton's. Guano, nitrate o' sober, Willey's dust,

Clarke's compost, petre salt, all scientific mextures should have a fair field and every favour; and he would come down annually twice a year to lector and report on them."

"MUCK'S YOUR MAN!" roared Pigg, as his master bowed his adieus to the meeting.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

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PROFESSOR PIGG, of the ROYAL CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY, having been appointed by JOHN JORROCKS, Esq., M.P., to manage his extensive agricultural concerns, begs to announce his intention of receiving a limited number of MUD STUDENTS, who will be instructed in the newest and most approved farming mysteries, particklar the use of guano, nitrate of sober, and other hartificial mextures.

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